



ELEFTHERIOS VENIZELOS



# ELEFTHERIOS VENIZELOS

HIS LIFE AND WORK

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

THE first time that I had the honour of meeting M. Venizelos was in London at Claridge's Hotel in January, 1913. We were both invited to lunch by an old friend of his, Dr. Dillon, the well-known English journalist, whom he had known before he left Crete.

I had of course known him by reputation, and had long admired the great man whom the Hellenic nation has produced in our day. Like everyone else, I had been struck by his brilliant and rapid career. Of his moral qualities I already knew something from a Roumanian friend, Prince Sebastian Morouzi, who had helped Venizelos with his rising in Crete. I had heard of his gentleness and goodness which concealed an extraordinary energy, backed by a brilliant intellect that was even more extraordinary. After his

arrival in Greece, there were four episodes in his life which I admired particularly :

First, the Statesman, when with no other support but popular favour, he yet refused to accede to the wishes of the frenzied crowd and call a constituent assembly, but insisted upon a mere revisionary Chamber. There are not many men in the world capable of such mastery over themselves.

Secondly, the Patriot, who introduced the principle of permanence of all officials into the Constitution of Greece, which till then had been given over as a prey to the appetites of factious parties.

Thirdly, the Cretan, who dared to forbid the door of the Greek Chamber to the Cretan deputies. Here we have an example of fine moral courage, strong enough to impose truth upon a mistaken nation even at the risk of being thought cowardly or treacherous.

Fourthly, the Greek, who by a stroke of genius concluded a treaty of alliance with Bulgaria without making any agreement about the partition of territories to be conquered together. In this case it was not only courage in the highest meaning of the word :

it was genius. An alliance between Greece and Bulgaria after what Tricoupis had suffered therefrom, was a very daring patriotic move. But not to have discussed partition beforehand, that is the stroke of genius that puts Venizelos on a level with Cavour and Bismarck, for otherwise no treaty could ever have been concluded between Greece and Bulgaria. Then either the abolition of Turkish domination in the Balkan peninsula would have been brought about without Greece, or else Greece would have made poor terms and would have found herself in the same difficulties as Serbia. And when I realize that, except M. Streit, no one shared the opinion of Venizelos, and that everyone wanted to formulate beforehand with the Bulgarians the conditions of future partitions, my admiration is greater than ever.

On other occasions I have seen Venizelos in the right, and carry the day in the teeth of opposition to the great gain of his country.

Such were my feelings when I made the acquaintance of Venizelos. I was attracted from the first. That head, like a Byzantine saint straight from a Church fresco, that

gentle and penetrating glance, that subtle smile, the irresistible sympathy which radiates from all his being, the almost girlish modesty, all the more charming when combined with a will of iron—all that strikes you the moment you see him. I asked him the secret of his success, and he replied in these simple but profound words: "I have always told my fellow-countrymen the truth and the whole truth, and I have always been quite prepared to lay down my power without regret." Sincerity, the cult of truth, that is the finest trait in Venizelos's character, and at the same time the secret of his strength.

When I proposed his health at Athens on October 25 (old style), 1913, I said to him, "Your great intellect, clear and well-balanced, your sincere devotion to truth . . ." and that, I think, is the truest synthesis of his genius.

The second time that I met Venizelos was also in London, and I then had occasion to observe another of his qualities. He is a true gentleman in every sense of the word. I knew quite well that nothing was decided between the victorious allies, and that the

settlement might easily degenerate into war ; for at that time I was myself fighting against M. Daneff, who knew nothing about the matter and in his ignorant infatuation was going headlong to disaster. I also had heard from Serbian friends how the Bulgarian delegates, and especially M. Daneff, bullied their colleague, and yet though Venizelos and I talked for an hour he never said a word against or made any allusion to his Bulgarian allies. I was much struck by this great courtesy ; I was the more struck by it because certain steps taken by M. Daneff had compelled me to tell him that in my own case my anxiety to remain loyal to my friends was even greater than my ambitions for my country. But the former Cretan revolutionary behaved like an English gentleman.

My other dealings with Venizelos are well known. All the world knows about the telegrams we exchanged on June 13 and 15 (new style), 1913, which laid the foundations for the Greco-Roumanian policy during the year 1913.

By relying on my word alone, and that a private and secret word, as to the policy of



Roumania in the event of the Bulgarians attacking the Greeks and Serbs, Venizelos paid me a high compliment. He was not mistaken in his trust, and that proves what a happy and fruitful meeting we had in London.

Other correspondence between Venizelos and myself is not yet published ; when it is, it will redound to the honour of the Greek Prime Minister. Before he arrived at Bucharest to negotiate about peace, I warned him that several cabinets, which still imagined that their approval would be necessary for the treaty we were to frame, would make difficulties about the question of Kavalla. I then asked Venizelos if he was adamant on this question. He replied with a categorical affirmative, and as I knew the man I had no doubt that he was speaking the truth. It was a great thing for me to know exactly the limits within which we could or could not arrive at a peace settlement.

My journey to Athens and the happy conclusion of the Greco-Turkish peace was likewise the result of an interchange of letters between us. On this occasion again Venizelos

gave proof of his statesmanlike qualities. If it had not been for his breadth of view and his frankness, peace would never have been concluded so speedily. In his public recognition of what I had done in the service of peace, Venizelos not only gave me another proof of his sincere friendship, but of the nobility of his mind. Few men could have written such a letter as he wrote me before I left Athens.

There are many other occasions too when we worked together which I shall never forget.

I had intended to say a few words about this great man, and I have been writing history. The Greek nation and Greeks all over the world have the right to be proud of him, and it is their duty to be so. For us his friends it is our duty to love him.

TAKE JONESCO.



## PREFACE

No task is more difficult or ungrateful than that of writing the biography of a contemporary politician, whose work is still in progress, guiding the destinies of a country and forming part of the history of Europe. As leader in Crete and as Prime Minister in Athens, M. Venizelos ranks with those whose life and action cannot be studied apart from the evolution of the world ; in the isle of Minos as in the city of Pallas he had but one aim, the greatness of Greece ; and his name must be written among the celebrities of our epoch.

Carlyle would assuredly have included him among his " Heroes," for M. Venizelos is a rare type ; a man who, finding his country in the throes of a military revolution, restored it and raised it to the highest triumphs of victory. The fact is he is a born statesman ;

before he had visited Europe in any capacity save that of a tourist, without any other training than his private studies, he had a clear vision in all problems, an instant and practical grasp of their solutions, the art of applying theories, and the gift of discovering the right persons to further his schemes, and an eloquence that could convince and carry men off their feet.

To these natural gifts he added cool and calculating daring, an immovable will, perseverance, authority, firmness, and that power of suggestion which gave the Greeks confidence in themselves and led them to victory.

He found Greece small, misunderstood, humiliated: he made her great, twice victorious, covered with glory and confident in the future. What higher praise can be given to a statesman?

\* \* \* \*

This study has no pretensions to be a complete history of M. Venizelos; but at least it will touch upon the most characteristic events of his career, those from which Greece has derived most profit, those of which we were eye-witnesses or which we have drawn from

official sources. It will be rather an anecdotal work, material which may one day help historians as corollaries to the documents destined to form the framework of their studies.

For ourselves we have no other wish than to produce an impartial and sincere study.

DR. C. KEROFILAS.

Paris, August, 1915.



PART I  
IN CRETE





# ELEFThERIOS VENIZELOS

## THE BEGINNING

EARLY in the year 1864, in the village of Mourniès, a charming little town an hour's journey from Canea, in a house surrounded by almond trees in blossom, two Muhammedan hodjas and two Greek priests were praying ; for two days and two nights they prayed ceaselessly near a room where the wife of a rich merchant of Canea was then in labour.

The poor mother had been very unfortunate so far ; she had given birth to three children, all of whom she had lost. So her relatives, with the credulity of Orientals, had advised her to call in the assistance of religious men renowned throughout the country for their supernatural power. They all four prayed in different tongues that the child about to be born should have long life.

At dawn on the third day a son was born,

Eleftherios Venizelos, the future Minister of Greece.

These curious details were told me by an eminent Cretan deputy, an intimate friend of the President of the Council: I am indebted to him for most of the facts concerning M. Venizelos's life in Crete. Moreover, one of the Greek priests, called Yarotheos, who baptized the child, was still alive about four years ago; his fellow-countrymen had called him "Yarotheos" (old god), on account of his miraculous powers.

\* \* \* \*

M. Venizelos's father belonged to one of the best families of Crete, whither his ancestors had emigrated long before from Crevata, near Sparta. While still young, he had taken an active part in the unionist movements, and had given large sums of money to further them. After the revolution of 1866 he was exiled, and took refuge with all his family first of all in Cythera, then in Syra, whence he returned to Canea in 1872 after the amnesty.

So Eleftherios Venizelos began his studies at Syra and continued them at Canea. He was always ahead of his fellow-pupils,

astounded his masters, and regularly ruled the other boys.

When his school days were over his father decided to send him into business, as he was anxious to hand over his own affairs to his son that the latter might eventually succeed him. Greece would have lost a great statesman had it not been for the intervention of M. Georges Zigomalas, the Greek consul-general at Canea, who foresaw the future to which this young man was destined. During the two years that Eleftherios Venizelos was apprenticed to his father's business, M. Zigomalas had many opportunities for talking to him and appreciating his keen intelligence.

"It is a great mistake," he kept repeating to his father, "to condemn your son to an obscure commercial existence; you are depriving the country of a useful defender. Believe me, let him study; he has the makings of an admirable lawyer."

At the end of two years the father of young Eleftherios gave in; he sent his son to the University of Athens, and the latter, after passing his examinations with brilliant success, came back as a lawyer in 1886. For the

second time he had an attack of typhoid fever. The first attack during his time at Athens was a mild one, but he nearly succumbed to the second and only survived by a miracle.

The following year we find him a deputy for Cydonies, a department of Crete, and he entered the Cretan Assembly, where he succeeded M. Mitsotakis as leader of the Liberal party (generally called the "barefoot" party, by contrast with the wealthy party).

His entry into the Chamber was a triumph : he brought to it burning zeal, new ideas, unknown principles. For centuries past Crete had lived beneath a terrible yoke, in perpetual revolt against her oppressors ; the divisions of the irreconcilable parties in the Chamber only intensified this hatred. There was no room there except for the numerical majority, by which everything was decided in the Chamber : the minority was always wrong, and had to go under.

The Liberal party, having won at the elections, wished to eliminate the seven or eight deputies of the Opposition ; M. Venizelos refused : in the course of a now famous speech, he said, " A party should not be

founded solely on numerical strength, but it also needs moral principles, without which it cannot do useful work or inspire confidence."

This profession of faith was to form the basis of his subsequent policy, both in Crete and in Greece.

The Cretan Chamber thus recognized all the deputies of the Opposition : this was the first victory won by this young man of twenty-three, whose strength of character, iron will, courage, and adventurous spirit triumphed over both his adversaries and his friends.

On one occasion he did not hesitate to denounce in the Chamber one of his political friends who had filled three lucrative posts by favouritism. This was a second triumph for the young leader, which substantially increased his ascendancy over this assembly of veteran heroes who were more accustomed to antagonism and warfare than to the refinements of justice.

From about this period M. Venizelos had a big lawyer's practice : he had no lack of difficult cases, thanks to his oratorical ability.

He spent hours in his library literally

devouring books, perfecting his French and teaching himself English.

Possessed as he was of a vast store of varied information, with a sweet and kindly disposition, and an intellect of high order, M. Venizelos was not slow to become a marked man in his country, the most powerful Cretan political leader, the man whose words carried most weight. His speeches, his doings, his schemes were already echoed across the sea, and soon his name was heard in political circles, and in all the clubs and centres of Athens.

Crete was passing through stormy times. It seems that the Porte by incessant intrigues wanted to involve the Cretans in internal political struggles, and to provoke the most bitter dissensions. It was with extreme disfavour that the Conservatives saw the Liberals come into power (1887) under the leadership of this young man who brought new gods to Crete. Serious disorders arose; there were even assassinations, which could not be repressed owing to the total absence of police. Moreover, far from trying to put a stop to these excesses, the Porte seemed to encourage them, anxious no doubt to seize an oppor-

tunity for intervention. This was soon found: forty thousand men disembarked at Crete, and repression began, bloody and atrocious (August, 1889).

Public opinion in Europe was aroused, but could not shake the inertia of the Chancelleries. Emboldened by this indifference, the Porte sent to Crete (December 7, 1889) Admiral Ratib Pasha with a firman drawn up in profound secrecy: the concessions granted to the islanders in 1878 were suppressed, in defiance of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin. Neither the protests of the Cretans nor Notes to the Powers from the Greek Government could alter the new state of affairs; the firman was applied with the utmost rigour.

Crete then resorted to an "election strike"; till 1894 the country went without a Chamber. This had no other result than to increase the tyranny of the Porte, and at last in June, 1894, an attempt was made on the life of the Governor Mahmoud Djelal Eddin Pasha, who asked to be recalled; he was succeeded by Caratheodory Pasha, a Christian and a more liberal-minded man. The General Assembly (which was also known as, and was,



in fact, the "Cretan Chamber of Deputies") was at once summoned, but did not sit, as no understanding could be reached by Christians and Musulmans.

## II

### AT AKROTIRI

ON September 16, 1895, another revolution broke out in Crete. Like all Cretan revolutions, the movement began by demands for very mild reforms. But Turkey would not make any reply to these demands. English diplomacy then stepped in as the protector of Crete. The Turkish Ambassador complained to Lord Salisbury that the Cretan agitators were in close relations with the British consul-general at Canea. (Blue Book, 1896, p. 14.)

It is true that Lord Salisbury repudiated the attitude of the consul, Sir A. Biliotti, but I know from Cretan sources that the representations of the Turkish Ambassador were founded on fact, for English policy was then unfavourable to Turkey on account of Armenian affairs. As Turkey made no reply to the Cretans the Executive Commission which

governed the island addressed a protest, on February 28, 1896, to the consuls of the Powers, that they should force Turkey to grant reforms to the island. The only step taken by the Porte was to send more armed forces to Crete. The Musulmans of Crete (the Turko-Cretans), who naturally hate the Greek element on the island, were thus emboldened, and joining forces with the soldiers they set to work to terrorize the country. They began to fire the villages, and assassinate the Christians. On May 25, 1896, the soldiers and Turko-Cretans attacked the unarmed Christians in the streets of Canea, killing thirty-two persons and pillaging the houses and shops of the Christians. The fanaticism of the Musulmans awoke, and the whole island was put to fire and sword.

In the face of these events public opinion in Greece was roused. Societies were formed in aid of the Cretans to send them rifles and money, and finally the Greek Government was compelled to intervene.

At the request of the Greek Government the Powers decided to intervene; warships cruised in Cretan waters, while negotiations

began with the Porte. On August 26 a new arrangement gave the island a measure of autonomy under the sovereignty of the Sultan. It had only a very ephemeral existence ; the promises made to the Powers were no sooner made than they were violated ; not a single clause of the agreement was respected. Worse than this, in January, 1897, massacres began again at Canea and Retimo ; on February 4 the Christian quarter of Canea was set on fire and the consuls had to seek refuge on board the warships in the harbour. The whole town was put to fire and sword, and the Cretans, driven to despair, proclaimed their union with Greece.

\* \* \* \*

At the time of the massacres, M. Venizelos was on an electoral tour a long way from Canea : with no thought save for his duty he returned post-haste and took command of the band of insurgents then concentrated at Akrotiri, about a quarter of an hour from the town.

However, in Greece public opinion was aroused : it forced the hand of the Government, which on February 10 sent Prince

George in command of a flotilla of torpedo-boats; three days later Colonel Vassos disembarked in Crete at the head of two thousand men, and took possession of the island in the name of King George. At the same time the Powers ordered their admirals to disembark landing-parties and to paralyse the action of the Greek troops.

Some solution had to be found for this state of affairs; at England's suggestion the Powers decided to grant Crete autonomy under the suzerainty of the Sultan. On March 2 they communicated their decision to Greece, warning her at the same time that Crete could not be annexed to her under any conditions, and giving her six days to recall her troops and her ships. When Greece declined to obey this order, the blockade of the Cretan ports was decided upon. Colonel Vassos and his troops had to be withdrawn, as the Greek Government needed them elsewhere, for the unfortunate Greco-Turkish war had just broken out. (May, 1897.)

The Cretan revolutionaries, by no means discouraged, established themselves at Akrotiri; they appointed a commission with M.

Venizelos at its head to direct their camp. I have before me a photograph taken at this time, wherein the politician appears transformed into a soldier ; he is standing in the middle of a group of Cretan palikaris in national dress ; he is unarmed, and his thoughtful glance seems to reflect his inmost feelings for the misfortunes of Greece and Crete.

The insurgents rendered him the most absolute obedience ; one word from him was a command ; led by him they had no fear of the bullets of the European troops, nor of the guns of the warships in the harbour.

One of the most stirring incidents of this period was the bombardment by the European warships of the Greek flag which flew over the camp at Akrotiri on February 21, 1897.

The insurgents had been warned the preceding evening that this step would be taken.

" They are going to bring down our flag," said M. Venizelos to them in the evening.

" When ? " asked the palikaris.

" To-morrow morning. They want to take away our colours."

" Never. The Greek standard will always fly on the hill."

M. Venizelos turned towards the port of Suda, where the warships were anchored, and exclaimed: "You have cannon-ball—fire away! But our flag will not come down."

He looked with emotion at the blue and white emblem which fluttered in the wind on the summit of Akrotiri.

In the morning the tragedy opened; the warships took up their battle formation, and the admirals gave a final request that the flag should be lowered.

"Never," replied M. Venizelos, "lower it yourselves."

"We are going to bombard you."

"We are waiting."

Admiral Canevaro, who was commanding the international fleet, was very unwillingly obliged to carry out the formal orders which he had received—a most painful task, as he confided to me later, when I had the honour of meeting him in Rome. He had done his utmost to make the insurgents submit, but his efforts were bound to fail. The fatal hour had struck.

While the warships were making their

preparations, the insurgents took shelter behind the rocks, which were excellent natural fortifications. All eyes were turned towards the glorious standard.

“Look out for the flag!” cried Venizelos.

He was answered by gun fire from the guns : the Austrian ship *Marie-Thérèse* had fired the first shell.

“Look out for the flag!” repeated the young leader.

Cannon-ball began to fall upon the hill, in the middle of the light-hearted palikaris.

All of a sudden there was great commotion. The flagstaff was hit and looked like falling. Cries, oaths, curses. Everybody wanted to run and hold up the two colours.

But M. Venizelos outstripped all, and ran forward ; his friends stopped him ; why expose a valuable life so uselessly ?

A young Cretan climbed up the rock and lifted up the damaged flag. The Italian sailors on board their ship<sup>1</sup> were so enthusiastic over this heroism that they could not refrain from cheering. “And I myself,” said Admiral

<sup>1</sup> On account of its position the Italian warship had been unable to take part in the bombardment.



Canevaro to me, " applauded the heroes that my duty compelled me to attack."

What could avail against brute force? The courage of a handful of brave men could not silence the cannon's roar. The firing began again, riddling the flag, and tearing it to pieces; the sacred standard fell, covering with its tatters the valiant Cretans who had dared to defy Europe.

A month after the bombardment of the insurgents by the warships of the Powers, French and British troops occupied the positions opposite Akrotiri, thus making the blockade still stricter; their chief objective was Koutsospiro, a strategic position occupied by M. Venizelos and his partisans. Colonel Egerton, commanding the British troops, asked for an interview with the Cretan leader, who instantly met him in the neutral zone.

Colonel Egerton explained to him the object of this interview, but M. Venizelos merely replied: " We captured this position with blood, we shall only give it up with blood. Do your worst. We are not afraid

of your warships ; we know their shells well. Death alone can move us from here."

In face of this heroic obstinacy, the English Colonel could say no more.

When the Powers had occupied the island they were faced by a very complex problem. What were they to do with it? They could not stay there themselves for ever. They were obliged to find some solution ; there were three ways out of the difficulty.

1. They could restore Turkish power in the island ; but they realized that this was impossible.

2. They might hand Crete over to Greece. Public opinion and the European Press, especially in England, favoured this solution. But the diplomats were not of the same opinion. Mr. Balfour, M. Hanotaux, and Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, in their respective countries, declared that this action would cause a Greco-Turkish war, and inflame the Balkans.

3. When both these solutions were rejected there remained nothing but *autonomy*. England was the first to make this proposal, and all the Powers accepted it.

Baron Marschall proposed that the autonomy should take such a form that it would exclude the probability of the annexation of the island to Greece, and that it would confirm the absolute retention of the principle of the integrity of Turkey." (Yellow Book, 1894-1897, page 51.) Carrying its Turkophil bias still further, Germany proposed that the Powers should send their fleet to blockade the Piræus, so that Greece would be obliged to recall from Crete the army that she had sent there under Colonel Vassos.

England was the first to reject this. "We ought to pacify the Greeks," said Lord Salisbury, "and make them understand that under no circumstances will the island return to submission to Turkish power pure and simple." (Yellow Book, p. 73.) France, Italy, Austria and Russia followed Lord Salisbury's opinion.

On March 15, 1897, the Powers addressed to Greece a Note based on Lord Salisbury's proposal. Unfortunately the Greek Government, led away by public opinion, replied to the Powers in a haughty tone, a mistake which compelled them to declare the auto-

nomny of Crete under the suzerainty of the Sultan and to blockade the island with their fleets on March 20, 1897.

The details of the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, of which Crete was the object, are too well known to be dwelt upon here.

But public opinion in Europe, and especially in England, where Gladstone was continually protesting against the blockade, demanded that it should be raised. By now the Greco-Turkish war was dying out. Greece was obliged to withdraw her army from Crete, and it was only then that the international blockade was raised.

On July 8 the revolutionary Assembly met at Armenoi, in the province of Apocorones ; M. Venizelos was elected president. In order to centralize the insurrection, which was spreading to the Eastern provinces, it was arranged that the Assembly should sit at Arhanes, a large town about one and a half hour's journey from Candia ; on his arrival a surprise awaited him ; public opinion there was against the insurrection and in favour of autonomy. A word of explanation is necessary.

The province of Candia had suffered most

severely from incessant revolutions ; regular Turkish troops and more than two thousand irregulars were incessantly attacking the Christians, massacring them and burning their houses. Driven to desperation, the inhabitants saw no end to their sufferings except through autonomy guaranteed by the Powers, since the unfortunate Greco-Turkish war put all hope of union with Greece out of the question ; they therefore demanded this solution, and tried to advocate it in the first sitting of the Assembly. But the delegates of the insurgents at Akrotiri stood firm for union.

“ I shall never let history,” cried M. Venizelos in a fine outburst of patriotism, “ accuse me of being a traitor. For what other name can be given to a man who would accept autonomy ? Have you forgotten that it is on your account that the mother country is involved in an unfortunate war ? Have you forgotten the heavy sacrifices that she has made in order to come to our help ? Now that she is suffering in the hour of trial, shall we be so base as to betray her, forget her, and abandon her ? Neither I nor the volunteers at Akrotiri wish to become traitors.”

These words raised a perfect storm ; M. Venizelos had only sixteen followers in the whole Assembly ; the other delegates all declared in favour of autonomy. The discussion degenerated into a quarrel ; the delegates came to blows, and one of the leader's opponents drew a knife to kill him : most fortunately the presence of mind of some moderate men prevented a bloody crime. The sitting came to an end in a scene of unutterable confusion.

One might have thought that the Cretan leader, in the midst of this hostile population, would yield to the tide of opinion. He did no such thing.

In the evening another attempt was made on his life. In the middle of the night his enemies surrounded the house where he was resting and set it on fire ; in order to escape he had to face about a thousand demonstrators, who were massed about the building : Venizelos and his friends performed this exploit, and even harangued their assailants, whom they denounced as " traitors to their country," and " unworthy of liberty." His enemies were dumbfounded by this intrepid

display, and made way for him to go free. Without a word he left the house and village, his only fear being lest his country should suffer through the folly of a handful of fanatics.

\* \* \* \*

M. Venizelos then went to Athens to come to an arrangement with the Greek Government as to the line of conduct to be followed by the insurgents of Akrotiri. There he met M. Sfakianakis, a retired Cretan politician, who, though he no longer took an active part in politics, had great influence upon public opinion in Crete. They returned to the island together, and went to Meldoni (in the department of Retimo), where they convoked the revolutionary Assembly on October 29.

Immediately upon his return to Akrotiri on September 6, 1897, he sent the following document to Admiral Canevaro, commanding the international squadron :

“ I regret to learn that the responsible organs of the European Press, and especially the English Press, have put a false and calumnious interpretation upon my election as president of the Assembly and have denounced me as an agent of the National Society.

“ I am not aware whether this Society still exists after the disasters which befel the country from the Greco-Turkish war, for which it was partly responsible. I only know that my position in the country and my line of conduct up to the present day hardly justify this serious accusation, according to which my motives are other than my country’s interests.

“ If I were accused merely of being a *nationalist*, in the sense that I am absolutely devoted to the national idea, and deeply convinced that union with Greece is the only final solution of the question, then the accusation would be a just one and I should accept it with pleasure because I should share it with the whole Cretan people.

“ But this my conviction does not blind me to the duties of practical politics, and since the free kingdom of Greece, in the throes of an unfortunate war, withdrew her army of occupation from Crete and recognized its autonomy, I have never ceased to state that we are obliged to respect the decisions of the Powers and accept autonomy as a *further stage towards the realization of the national ideal.*”

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the value of



this document which shows both the subtle and far-seeing diplomatic genius and the burning patriotism of this young man of thirty-three, who was to become later on the greatest European diplomatist of his day.

In a speech which he made on January 28 at the opening of the Assembly at Meldon, in the province of Retimo, he said :

“ Naturally, what we obtain to-day does not correspond with the aspirations of our fathers, nor with the dreams we ourselves have cherished since our infancy. But we must quit ourselves wisely and honourably. So shall we take a big step towards the realization of our national ideal, and what has still to be accomplished will come to pass in the fullness of time without disturbing or shattering the work of our peaceful evolution.”

These two documents embody, so to speak, his political programme in Crete.

The Greco-Turkish peace had just been signed, so there could be no hope of union. After discussing the question with his friends, M. Venizelos agreed to drop the unionist

movement and to submit to the offer of the Powers : a large measure of autonomy under certain conditions. But he did not do so without a final protest.

He then went to the famous convent of Arkadi, over which he hoisted the standard of autonomy, which differed very little from the Greek flag ; thence he returned to Akrotiri, whither the revolutionary Assembly also moved. Its recognition by the Powers was one of the great triumphs of the leader, and enabled him to form an Executive Commission. He offered the presidency to M. Sfakianakis, while he himself was simply a member of it. Then he had the chance of proving his organizing power ; he was the head and brain which directed the autonomist machine, and he carried out the work successfully, in spite of jealousy and hatred.<sup>1</sup> In a month the organic laws were drawn up, the administrative and judicial arrangements

<sup>1</sup> On this point it is interesting to note that the Cretan statesman holds a sort of legislative record : on May 10, 1899, he was appointed judicial adviser and on June 1, that is to say, twenty-one days later, he brought out the new judicial legislation complete : a singular proof of his great efficiency, strength of will and energy.

were working, public order was maintained : the consuls of the Powers were astounded.

While this comparative quiet reigned in Crete, the Powers were still pondering over what sort of a Constitution they should grant to the island, and from an international point of view everything had still to be settled, when an episode occurred which upset all their plans.

The admirals were instructed to collect the harvest tithe, and were to begin on September 15, when the emissaries of the Porte suddenly opposed them. On September 18, 1897, the Turkish officials in the town of Candia refused to give up their bureaux for the administration of the tithe to the English, who had been ordered to collect it. The English were obliged to take possession by force, but the Musulman population besieged and massacred them. Then they went on to the house of the British vice-consul and set it on fire, and the vice-consul himself perished in the flames. Not content with this the Musulmans ran to the Christian quarter and started a general massacre. The result of that terrible day was one British officer, thirteen British

soldiers, and five hundred Christians massacred, two officers, forty British soldiers, and many Christians wounded.

When this news was announced all England was aroused. The British Government took the initiative, and on October 17, 1898, the Powers sent an ultimatum to Turkey demanding the recall from Crete within a month of the whole of her army and all her civil officials. Turkey had no choice but to give way before the firm attitude of the Powers. By November 16 all the Turks had left, and the admirals of the Powers undertook the government.

But it was not possible for Crete to remain permanently under the government of the admirals, and therefore, at Russia's suggestion, the Powers decided to appoint a High Commissioner. The Tsar proposed his cousin, Prince George, a son of the King of Greece ; he was elected, and on December 21, 1898, he landed at Canea and took over the reins of government.

### III

#### VENIZELOS AND PRINCE GEORGE

PRINCE GEORGE, the High Commissioner for the Powers, chose his advisers from among the leaders of public opinion, and naturally M. Venizelos, whose popularity was growing daily, was one of them.

The Constitution was drawn up with a conservative bias ; M. Venizelos himself, who had codified the Cretan laws, was of opinion that it would not be advisable for the Cretan people to pass without a transitional stage from a dictatorial regime to one of absolute liberty.

The Prince's policy, or rather that of his circle, was apparently not favourably received by the autonomous population, and soon clouds appeared between the High Commissioner and his Minister. During the summer of 1900 the Prince said to the islanders:

" When I am travelling in Europe I shall ask the Powers for annexation, and I hope

to succeed on account of my family connections." These words were evidently the outcome of sincere feeling and youthful ardour. But they made M. Venizelos very uneasy and led him respectfully to submit to the Prince how dangerous it was from the point of view of government to promise anything which it was practically impossible to realize after such a short interval of the provisional regime.

Events confirmed this judgment; on his return from Europe, the Prince did not hesitate to confess to his adviser: "You were quite right. The Powers refuse annexation point-blank." Other differences of opinion and misunderstandings increased the difficulties of the situation, and added fuel to the smouldering animosity which divided the partisans of the Prince from those of M. Venizelos.

At the outset the Prince had the highest opinion of M. Venizelos, and considered him, next to M. Sfakianakis, as the most eminent Cretan and his wisest adviser. He appreciated his abilities, and had therefore entrusted him with the work of drawing up the Constitution and the organic laws.

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Unfortunately the Prince made the mistake of listening to the suggestions of some of his intimates who were enemies of Venizelos.

The palace affair was one of the incidents which strained the relations between the Commissioner and his adviser. Shortly after his arrival in Canea, the Prince expressed his intention of building a palace. M. Venizelos did not approve. He thought it his duty to remonstrate with the High Commissioner.

"I think," he said, "that your Excellency will understand the reason for my objection. The building of a palace will symbolize the permanence of a regime which the Cretan people has accepted as a last stage on the road to union; the present state of affairs cannot last long. I think this building would serve no good purpose, and would indeed do harm, inasmuch as it would hurt the feelings of the Cretans; do not take away from them all hope of a prompt union, even though it cannot be realized as soon as we wish."

The Prince did not reply, but he was vexed at the interference, and he and his adviser had a most deplorable misunderstanding. The situation became more and more strained, and

reached such a pitch that on March 31, 1901, the Prince saw nothing for it but the dismissal of his adviser. It was a serious step to take, in view of the influence which M. Venizelos had throughout the country. Between him and the High Commissioner a great gulf yawned.

This is not the place to discuss who was responsible; we will merely state the facts and leave the verdict to history when official documents are published. But one thing is certain, and that is, that the insurrection of Therisso was not provoked nor raised by M. Venizelos, though it was under his patronage; it was solely the result of the unfortunate policy adopted by the Prince's entourage.

M. Venizelos's dismissal was the signal for the persecution of his partisans and friends; the newspapers which supported him were suppressed. Everything was done to depreciate his political work; he was denounced as a conspirator, the friend and instrument of England, the opponent of union with Greece. As a result, M. Venizelos's followers conceived a profound hatred for the Prince; the ranks of the Opposition were increased daily by every



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one with a grievance throughout the island, and popular sympathies, which the intrigues against him had not affected, put M. Venizelos himself at the head of the movement.

The quarrel smouldered, but did not die down. We must repeat that it was not a conflict of persons but of ideas. The insurrection of Therisso had no other object save union with Greece ; naturally the Prince was attacked in his office as High Commissioner, but there was no personal animosity against him, and no desire that he should be removed.

M. Venizelos has been accused of fostering ill-feeling against the ruling dynasty of Greece. His whole policy refutes this accusation ; from the moment that he handled the reins of government to this day, his policy has been frankly and sincerely loyal. We cannot forget that one of the first things he did in the Greek Chamber was to reinstate the royal Prince in the army and appoint him to a high command.

M. Venizelos was far too clear-sighted not to realize the necessity of dynastic power. He can certainly never be described as a

“courtier” : he would never stoop to flattery even to further his great aim, the future of his country : he was too honest for this. But he was never anti-royalist.

As for the accusation that the movement of Therisso was directed against the person of Prince George, we can refute that by documents which are to be found in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at Athens ; there are 120 documents relative to this affair, which were sent there by the revolutionary government of Therisso.

One of these documents is a sort of profession of faith of the insurgents ; it is the revolutionary form of oath ; it declares summarily that they demand union with the mother country, and that they desire no change in the High Commissionership until that union is carried into effect ; that if events over which they have no control should bring about the departure of Prince George, they swear to oppose the appointment of a foreign commissioner and to accept no one in this capacity except a Greek statesman chosen from among former Presidents of the Council.

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The consuls of the Great Powers were acquainted with this document and informed their governments ; so that after Prince George's departure, M. A. Zaïmis, an eminent Greek statesman, was appointed to succeed him.

This digression seemed necessary to explain events ; we will now return to those events.

\* \* \* \*

The discontent of the Cretans was justified ; the first High Commissioner had been appointed by the Powers contrary to the wishes of the Porte. Their choice had fallen upon the second son of the King of Greece ; it was only natural that the Cretans should consider this the prelude to union. But time was passing ; their impatience increased with the delay ; administrative mistakes added to their dissatisfaction. On August 19, 1904, they sent a petition to the Prince begging him to "inform the Great Powers of the firm resolution of Crete, and urging them not to postpone its union with Greece."

This petition had no result ; bitterly disappointed, fifteen hundred armed Cretans, supported by all the mountaineers of Sfakia,

always the first to rise, met at Therisso on March 23, 1905. This village is about half a mile south-west of Canea, on the road to the south coast, where in 1821 a few hundred insurgents had successfully resisted a Turkish army of twenty-one thousand men. They chose Venizelos as their leader, and he left his legal practice to share the rough life of the insurgents; amongst his palikaris he was to endure fatigue and suffering and even risk his life.

## IV

### THERISSO

“ONE fine March evening in 1905, a tall, thin man of about forty, with a sparse brown beard, was walking towards Canea by the coast road which leads from the suburb of Halepa to the capital.

“At this time of year it is already spring in the island of Minos, and the white villas of the suburb are half-hidden in greenery. High walls surround them, but yet not so high that they prevent the passer-by from catching glimpses of gay flower beds from which sweet scents rise like incense going up to heaven.

“In this little corner of an earthly Paradise, Prince George’s palace, the consulates, and dwellings of the more wealthy Cretans are hidden among the winding paths. The man of whom we are speaking was just going down the steep hill at the bottom of which stands

the building of the International Club facing seawards, when a closed landau passed him going in the same direction.

"Thinking the carriage was empty the man hailed it, and the coachman, although he had a fare, stopped as soon as he recognized the stranger.

"The carriage door was opened, and the Prince's private secretary put his head out. He also recognized, or rather guessed, who the stranger was in the half-light, and never dreaming that he was mistaken, he hurriedly got out in the hope of a private conversation, which, under the critical circumstances, would, he thought, be particularly desirable.

"But his illusion was short-lived. M. Venizelos (for it was no other than the leader of the Opposition), in a few courteous words, explained his mistake.

"The two opponents bowed coldly, and the private secretary resumed his drive towards Canea, while Venizelos, after stopping a few moments at the International Club to see his friends, entered the first vehicle he saw and was driven into the country, to the village of Mourniès, at the entrance to the deep gorge

which leads by impossible goat-paths to the impregnable position of Therisso. The revolution of 1905 had begun."

The above anecdote seemed of interest, and we have borrowed it from a book, *L'Orient Hellénique*, by M. Van Den Brule, who lived in Crete throughout this period ; it shows the spirit of the island during these years. From the same book we quote the following portrait of M. Venizelos in his fighting days :

"His vast and cultivated intellect enabled him to co-ordinate and assimilate all the many troublesome details of which all politics are composed, whether they are politics on a grand scale or village pump politics. But he could also grasp all the variations in the European situation which are at the root of the Cretan question, and exploit them for the furtherance of his own schemes, but without ever crossing the border line beyond which it would be clumsy or dangerous to oppose them.

"Astonishing self-control (this Southerner has all the characteristics of the North) helped him to maintain that ascendancy over others which he had won by his remarkable powers of oratory ; for the speech of this

people is so honeyed, fluent, and full of imagery, their slightest gesture so naturally noble that it has a majesty full of eloquence.

“This man seemed destined to reach the greatest heights in Hellas to which in his inmost dream he longed for the ‘Eternal Rebel’ to be united.”

This description is quoted from a book which appeared in 1907, when M. Venizelos was still a Cretan statesman. M. Van Den Brule was one of the many prophets who foretold the future of the present Prime Minister of Greece. But let us return to Therisso.

On March 23, 1905, the Assembly of Therisso proclaimed “political union with the kingdom of Greece in one free and constitutional state.” When the plebiscite was announced to the consuls of the Powers, the following arguments were put forward: (1) The autonomy granted by the Powers was considered by the Cretans a purely transitional measure towards the final liberation of the island, which, in accordance with the wishes of the people, could be nothing less than union with Greece; (2) the economic disadvantage of such a hybrid and tran-



sitory scheme ; (3) customs isolation ; (4) the impossibility of attracting foreign capital. On the same day that the Assembly of Therisso proclaimed the union of the island with Greece, Prince George, who had persuaded the Powers to allow an international corps to co-operate with the Cretan police in order to prevent the insurgents of Therisso from descending upon Canea, himself published a proclamation threatening international intervention if the insurgents did not disband.

The regular Assembly which met on April 20 at Canea was not content merely to pass a vote in favour of annexation, as had been done two years before : in a hall decorated exclusively by Greek flags it boldly proclaimed " the union of Crete to the mother-country Greece, so that it shall evermore be a part of it under the constitutional sway of George King of the Hellenes," and ordered the resolution to be communicated to the consuls.

The Powers replied on May 2 that they were " firmly resolved to have recourse to such fresh naval and military measures as would be necessary to ensure respect for their decision to maintain order."

## ATTEMPT AT RECONCILIATION 43

These military measures were not enough to frighten the Cretans, and the insurrection developed at its leisure. Most of the Cretan deputies who had gone away for their vacation on May 31 without having done anything, went to join the Assembly at Therisso; a month later one of the two principal advisers of the Prince resigned in order to join his former colleague, M. Venizelos, in the mountains.

Things were going badly for the High Commissioner; he realized at last the political necessity of making friends again with his former councillor, and he deputed this delicate task to a mutual friend, Mr. Bouchier, the *Times* correspondent in the East.

Early in 1902 Mr. Bouchier sought an interview with M. Venizelos, who was then in the insurgents' camp at Therisso. The statesman hastened to accept the invitation, but he definitely declined to consider conciliation, as he thought any scheme of co-operation with the High Commissioner was out of the question. He led away the emissary in a friendly manner, saying: "For the moment the Prince's principles cannot enter into a pro-

gramme of practical politics, and therefore we cannot accept them."

The attempt had failed.

\* \* \* \*

The Powers were at a deadlock. To put an end to this intolerable situation, they had to resort to a dangerous expedient ; they decided to " parley." On July 13 the leaders of the insurgents were invited to meet the European consuls.

The next day M. Venizelos, accompanied by two other members of the revolutionary government, M. Fournis and M. Manos, met them at the monastery of Ayamoni, near the village of Mourniès.

After the usual compliments had passed (for before the revolt consuls and insurgents were on the most cordial social terms) the sitting opened with a speech by the British consul, Sir Alfred Biliotti ; in the name of his colleagues, among whom he was the doyen, he recalled the reasons why union with Greece could not be contemplated, and he deplored the unfortunate discord which had brought about the revolt of Therisso.

This declaration made no effect upon the

decision of the revolutionary leaders, and the discussion came to an end without any agreement having been made.

On July 25, the Insurrectionist Committee issued a fresh proclamation demanding the institution of a regime similar to that in Eastern Roumelia ; on July 31 the Powers put the island under martial law. At first this measure had little or no results ; the insurgents held the mountain, and were quite determined to retire if necessary to the White Mountains. The insurgents continued to occupy the whole western area, where perfect order reigned.

The regular Assembly at Canea was so encouraged by the movement at Therisso, that at its sitting on September 7 it passed several reforms from the Venizelist programme, and before the Prince's party had time to recover, it decided that a national assembly should be convoked with power to legislate on all outstanding questions.

The international troops also became more active ; the English occupied Candia and its neighbourhood ; the Russians Retimo ; the Italians established themselves at Kissamo,

and the French at Saint Nicholas, Sita and Hierapetra. Winter had come, and the lot of the insurgents was harder ; on the other hand, fresh proposals reached M. Venizelos, and he decided to parley again with the consuls in the hope of obtaining the maximum of concessions in the internal affairs of the island.

The end of these pourparlers was an official letter to the Powers from the insurgents, drawn up by M. Venizelos, and notifying their intention of laying down their arms in exchange for just and honourable conditions. The Powers granted important reforms, and an amnesty was proclaimed on condition that 700 rifles should be given in. On November 25, eight months after the outbreak of the movement, the insurrection came to an end, but not till it had forced Prince George to resign.

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We will not enumerate the events of secondary importance which led Prince George to resign in July, 1904 ; his departure put the Cretans in a dangerous position : the Powers were in military occupation of the island and

might restrict its autonomy by appointing a foreign High Commissioner, but this possibility was negatived by the insurgents at Therisso swearing to acknowledge no governor but a Greek statesman, and by the mediation of the King of Greece at the Courts with which he had family connections. The Powers decided to allow the King of Greece himself to choose the High Commissioner subject to their approval. Thus M. Zaïmis was appointed, while he remained a deputy in the Hellenic Parliament: to assist him in his work the Powers authorized the presence of Greek officers at the head of the militia and the police.

The Turkish revolution broke out on July 24, 1908, and was followed by the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria on October 3, 1908, and by the proclamation of Bulgarian independence on October 5. On October 7 another insurrection, the fourteenth since 1830, broke out in Crete: already, on October 3, with the consent of the Athenian Government, M. Zaïmis had left the island, provisionally, as he said. As a matter of fact he never returned.

By the morning of October 7 Canea was decorated as though for a fête: the Greek colours were flown everywhere. At two o'clock fifteen thousand people gathered on the Champ-de-Mars under the presidency of M. Venizelos, who addressed them thus: "The revolution is pacific and is not directed against any power: its sole object is the definite proclamation of union with the mother-country. In future the Government will act in the name of the Hellenic kingdom, and the Assembly, summoned for an extraordinary session, will be called upon to sanction the decision of the people by an official vote."

On the following day, the Government and the officials took an oath of fidelity to King George: on October 12 the Assembly ratified the decision of the Cretan people and adjourned after having appointed an "Executive Commission" of five members of whom M. Venizelos was one.

As Minister of Justice and of Foreign Affairs, M. Venizelos achieved real diplomatic triumphs at this period. He succeeded in persuading the Powers to recognize the revolutionary Government and to exchange

diplomatic documents with him, although they had not officially recognized the new state of affairs; as a matter of international law this was quite abnormal.

The departure of the international troops on July 26 brought about fresh complications : no sooner had they embarked than the Cretans replaced their flag of autonomy by the Hellenic colours ; Turkey protested to the Powers and a compromise was effected, under which, on the morning of August 5, a tin Turkish flag was hoisted, and thus represented the vague suzerainty of the Sultan over the heroic island. This tin flag remained, long after it had lost all its colour, till the final union of the island to the mother-country. Nevertheless, the people were discontented and the provisional government was obliged to resign and was replaced by a new commission from which Venizelos voluntarily kept aloof.

In April, 1910, the Assembly was dissolved and was followed by the election of a constituent Assembly of which M. Venizelos was the President and Prime Minister. This Assembly, which was known as the " Greek Assembly of the Cretans," at a solemn sitting passed a



resolution of union with Greece. The President had not finished reading it aloud, when Housseïn Naïm Beyzadé, the Musulman deputy for Canea, rose and handed the President a document in which the Musulman deputies "protested against the opening of the Chamber according to Greek laws." The President of the Chamber held out his hand to take the protest, when all of a sudden the deputy Daskoloyanis (whose grandfather had been flayed alive by the Turks) snatched the document and tore it in pieces. While the Turks protested M. Venizelos stooped to pick up the pieces and tried to put them together. Afterwards, he went up into the tribune and in the name of his supporters declared that he "disapproved of the attempt to prevent the Musulmans from expressing their opinions freely and invited them to replace the protest that had been destroyed." This they did, not forgetting to add a further strong protest on the incident.

The Powers had replied to the complaints of the Porte : "Pay no attention to the resolutions of the Cretan Chamber ; we continue to recognize your sovereign rights." One can

imagine the despair of the Cretans when they heard of this reply ; the question of union had not been shelved certainly, but what a long time it would be before it came!

Precisely at this juncture an unexpected event took place, the importance of which will be apparent later. The Military League invited M. Venizelos to Athens, and as we shall see, this was to hasten the longed-for day in a singular manner.



PART II  
IN ATHENS



## CHAPTER I

### ARRIVAL IN ATHENS

WHEN the military revolt broke out in Athens on August 15, 1909, the people uttered a cry of deliverance ; no revolt has ever been more bloodless, or more essentially popular. The Greek nation was suffering from a general unrest ; it was tired of Parliamentary slackness, of the Government's indifference, and the laxity of discipline.

In view of this smouldering discontent the officers of the army formed themselves into a league, and prepared in secret an anti-constitutional movement, a *pronunciamento*, inspired, however, by ideas that were wholly noble and patriotic.

They sent a deputation of officers to the Prime Minister, M. D. Rhalys, to submit to him a memorandum that was nothing less than an indictment. The Prime Minister declined to receive the deputation. Much dissatisfied, the officers, followed by some of the

garrison, went off armed on August 8 and established themselves in the camp of Goudi, some distance from the town. Rhalys realized that the affair might develop into an insurrection, and sent in his resignation in August, 1909.

The new President of the Council, Mavromichalis, granted all the demands made by the officers, who thenceforth formed a powerful League under the leadership of Colonel Zorbas. A decree provided for the amnesty of both officers and soldiers who had retired to Goudi, and they returned to barracks.

The Military League was now omnipotent, and imposed its wishes both on the Ministers and on the Chamber. It demanded that a national assembly should be summoned to revise the Constitution. But this measure was not approved either by the King or by the Government. In face of the formal injunctions of the League, to which it would not give way, the Cabinet resigned on January 27, 1910.

The new Cabinet was formed by Dragoumis. General Zorbas, the head of the League, was made Minister of War. All parties were represented in this Ministry, which was a transitional cabinet to preside over the revi-

sion of the Constitution. It had indeed accepted this principle, and was to submit to the Chamber a scheme for a revisionary assembly which had been agreed upon.

On March 2 the Chamber adopted the proposal to revise the non-fundamental clauses of the Constitution. One party in the League demanded that the Assembly should be constituent. The difference between constituent and revisionary is very simple. The former was prepared to modify the fundamental articles of the Constitution and to abolish many royal prerogatives, while the latter only aimed at altering, as indeed it did, the non-fundamental clauses. In this case the Chamber got the better of the Military League, and thus the royal family was saved. On March 20 the King read a statement before the Chamber announcing that the revisionary chamber would be summoned by royal decree. The committee of the Military League, which had promised that it would dissolve itself on the day that the statement relating to this summons was made public, instantly passed a resolution by which the Military League declared itself dissolved.



When the officers succeeded in bringing off the *coup d'état* of Goudi, the Greek people determined to break with a past that made the present intolerable and the future hopeless. Unfortunately the perpetrators of the revolution, though full of good intentions, had no time to draw up a programme; they imagined that a hasty recasting of the laws would revive the nation. They soon saw their mistake; a new situation needs new ideas; what they wanted, under the circumstances, was a man who had matured a political programme and was determined to apply it without flinching.

In 1907 the Powers had authorized Greek officers to go to Crete to reorganize the police; these officers had known M. Venizelos intimately, and had admired his intellect and his patriotism; they told the Military League, of which they were members, about him, and on their advice the League offered the government to the Cretan statesman.

M. Venizelos then went to Athens, where he met the leaders of the League; he unfolded his programme and asked for full powers to put it into effect. Then, having first returned

to Crete to put the finishing touch to affairs in the island, he went travelling about Europe for a rest cure. While so engaged he missed no opportunity to plead in official circles the cause of his unhappy island.

The revisionary elections for the Assembly took place in Greece on August 21; his candidature was warmly welcomed by the Athenians, and he was elected first deputy by an immense majority. He was at Lausanne when the news reached him, and he hurried back to his native town, stopping in Rome on the way.

At this time Italy's private interests made her sympathize with the wishes of the Cretans; the latter were just making an effort to send their deputies to the Hellenic Chamber, and Turkey was threatening the Greeks with a "military expedition" to the gates of Athens if the Cretan deputies were admitted.

While he was in Rome, M. Venizelos asked for and received an audience from the Marquis di San Giuliano. The following day the Minister for Foreign Affairs pronounced this flattering opinion of him: "M. Venizelos is a political

genius ; I admired him. He is, I am persuaded, destined to play a great part in the affairs of Greece.”

This remark was repeated to me by Signor Galli, to whom it was made during a private conversation.

\* \* \* \*

When M. Venizelos was back in Canea he still remained in constant communication with the League, and inspired its policy. On September 12, 1910, when a propitious moment arrived, he resigned the presidency of the Cretan Council and handed it over to one of his political friends, B. Maris. Whereupon a delegation composed of deputies and Hellenic notabilities arrived from Athens with instructions to bring back the new Minister, and three days later, on September 17, M. Venizelos set sail for Greece.

On the day of his departure a farewell banquet was given him by the town of Canea ; curiously enough the politician was to the fore, the family man in the background ; neither children nor relatives were near him, he was surrounded only by the companions of his struggles. In his garden Captain Kalogeris

or Captain Kakouris, I do not know which of the two, said these words of farewell: "Do your utmost, Sir, to put an end to our situation . . . "

Till the moment he started he showed no emotion; yet he was leaving for ever his country, his house and his people. The memories of his political and fighting days alone seemed to pass before his eyes.

Ministers, deputies, and military leaders sat on his right and left speechless; about him were the people of Canea; occasionally sobs broke the impressive silence of the scene.

He opened his mouth to reply, for he had so much to say to all who were thronging round him; they reminded him of his past life, which had been so stormy yet so full of heroism and sacrifice. For him this crowd represented his youth which was beginning to fade away. He tried to speak but he could only utter these three words:

"My dear fellow-citizens . . ."

This was the only display of emotion in the history of this remarkable man.

\* \* \* \*

On the following day the people of Piræus

and Athens, with an outburst of enthusiasm such as had never been known, welcomed the man in whom they put all their hopes for regeneration and for the future. A large number of boats and ships went out to meet him, and a delegation of deputies welcomed him on board. At the station at Athens he was met by the corporations with about forty flags, and accompanied to his hotel. Venizelos thanked the vast crowd from the balcony, and speaking of the state of affairs, he justified the revolt against antiquated legislation.

"My criticisms upon the inertia of royalty," said he, "have been misinterpreted as anti-dynastic. On the contrary I believe that it is to the nation's interest to show its devotion to the reigning dynasty, and I therefore consider that the Assembly should remain revisionary, and recast the bases of legislation, according to modern requirements, in all matters dealing with public education, with labour questions and the relations of capital and labour.

"I will therefore co-operate with those whose aim is to raise Greece morally and materially to the level of other modern

## PRIME MINISTER

States, and to make her the great factor in civilization and progress in the East."

Here we must mention an anecdote which shows what an influence Venizelos already exercised over men at this time.

Almost all the people wanted the Assembly to be constituent and not revisionary ; so that when M. Venizelos said " I consider that the Assembly ought to remain revisionary " the crowd below the balcony began to shout : " Constituent, constituent ! " M. Venizelos did not lose his head, and when the shouts ceased he simply repeated his sentence : " I consider that the Assembly should remain revisionary. " " Constituent ! " shouted the people. " I say revisionary, " repeated the speaker.

As if by magic the seething crowd was silent, accepting and welcoming the proposal of the man who was already spoken of as the " Cretan Deliverer. "

The Military League, realizing that the Dragoumis Ministry was too feeble to carry out the necessary reforms, forced it to resign. On October 15 the King instructed M. Venizelos to form a cabinet. The statesman

submitted his programme to the King, gave him his views on necessary reforms and on the remedies for the ills from which the country was suffering. He concluded with these words :

“ If Your Majesty consents to give me a free hand and to ratify this programme, I undertake in five years’ time to show him a regenerate Greece, strong enough to inspire respect and claim her rights.”

With his usual acuteness, the King realized with what kind of man he had to deal ; he gave him his confidence, and two years were sufficient for M. Venizelos to lead Greece to surprising triumphs.

On October 19 he took the oath at the King’s hands and came before the Chamber with his Ministry.

But the Opposition, in spite of its promises of benevolent neutrality, had woven an intrigue in order to force M. Venizelos to say whether the King had given him the right of dissolution. The Prime Minister wanted to put an end to the discussion by asking for a vote of confidence. A great number of deputies who belonged to the parties of M.

Rhalys and M. Mavromichalis walked out, so that there were about twenty deputies too few to form a quorum.

The Government decided to resign, and at the same time announced that it would advise the Crown not to dissolve the Chamber, as it was an inopportune moment for so doing.

The King told M. Venizelos that the want of a Parliamentary quorum was no sign of a want of confidence, and he insisted that the Cabinet should meet the Assembly again.

An impressive demonstration of twenty thousand persons took an address to the palace, requesting the Sovereign to support M. Venizelos's Cabinet of reform. The demonstration then marched past the Minister's house, and Venizelos, much affected, thanked them from the balcony, and assured them that the reactionary intrigues of the parties would be of no avail, thanks to the co-operation of King and people for carrying out the programme of reforms.

In face of the confidence shown him by King and people, M. Venizelos consented to undertake the Government, and on October 24 he again came before the Hellenic Chamber



asking for a formal vote of confidence without restriction, and he added that if the Assembly did not give a clear decision he would ask the King to dissolve it ; the deputies passed the vote of confidence by 208 votes to 31, while 27 did not vote.

So many reservations were made to this vote that M. Venizelos felt sure that he would not have a working majority, for about seventy votes were given him as a personal favour. He was determined to dissolve the Chamber ; the King took his advice, and that same evening, October 24, issued a decree dissolving the Assembly, fixing the elections for December 11 and the opening of the session for January 8.

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On the eve of the elections of December 11, 1910, the Prime Minister made a speech, from which we have extracted the following profession of faith :

“ I do not promise that the Government will inaugurate the golden age in a day ; the disease has been serious, and its treatment will take long ; but what I can promise is that this treatment will be severe and radical. The first duty of a politician is to sacrifice

his personal interest and that of his party to the general interest of his country. It is also his duty always to speak the truth to great and small alike, without heeding the displeasure that his loyalty may provoke. Leaders must show an example of absolute submission to the law, or how will they be able to imbue their followers with their way of thinking? That is my fundamental principle. . . .

“The statesman must look upon power not as an end, but as a means to the realization of a lofty and patriotic aim. He must not hesitate to put it from him, if his maintenance at the head of government can only be bought by the sacrifice of his programme.

“It is not easy to govern, but with your support we can look forward to recovery and happy days in the future. Do not despair ; upon the ruins of the past shall rise with new foundations a political edifice which will enable the Hellenic nation to conform to the requirements of modern civilization and to the hopes of her regenerators.”

The Greek people showed once more its foresight and intelligence and followed the

advice of the great Cretan by electing him not merely by a majority but by almost every vote. Thus, with a new Chamber prepared to carry out his wishes, M. Venizelos was able to realize both his programme and his promises.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DELIVERER

A COMPLETE analysis of M. Venizelos's internal reforms is not possible here ; we will confine ourselves to a few words on his most characteristic achievements.

The first place must be given to the revision of the Constitution, an important work which could hardly fail to succeed when carried out by a man so thoroughly versed in constitutional reforms. In Crete M. Venizelos had studied closely all questions relating to a State in process of formation ; he had endowed his own country with a Constitution. What is more, he had played a leading part in that State. In Athens he found the opportunity for making use of his talent and for giving the Greeks the benefit of his long and vast experience.

But however thoroughly the Constitution were revised, it could never make any radical

alteration in the conditions of existence without legislative and administrative reforms, and these reforms were urgently needed in Greece. A remarkable legislative work was carried out by the Chamber on the advice of M. Venizelos and his able helpers. We can only give a very feeble idea of its magnitude here.

\*            \*            \*            \*

Sad to relate, justice in Greece had for long been unsatisfactory. Too often it was the slave of politics or an instrument of vengeance ; too often men were able to evade the rigour of the law, thanks to its antiquated procedure.

M. Venizelos instantly discerned which gaps needed filling, and, together with M. Dimitracopontos, the eminent Minister of Justice, he set to work to get new laws passed ; among them we must mention a law dealing with wills, a law against usury, a law protecting the creditor from the default of the debtor, the simplification of civil tribunals, a law of limitations, another dealing with contumacy, acts providing for the rebuilding of prisons and the reform of penitentiaries, increased

salaries for magistrates and legal officials to protect the dignity of justice, an act for the building of law courts, another obliging fraudulent plaintiffs and defendants to pay costs.

The work of the Venizelos Cabinet dealing with public education was no less remarkable.

The University of Capodistrias, founded by the Domboli legacy, was annexed to the University of Athens; new chairs and new laboratories were created. Steps were taken for the foundation of two hundred new municipal schools.

The law relating to the Communes also redounds to the credit of M. Venizelos's Ministry, as also the draining of the marshes, for which three millions have been voted up to the present, the extension of the telegraphic and postal system, the reorganization of the police, which till then had been most inefficient.

But it is especially in his financial reforms that M. Venizelos showed his wonderful insight. On his own confession we know that absolute chaos reigned. M. L. Coromilas, then Minister of Finance, was directed to draw up a bill for the complete reorganization

of the public accounts, so that some light should penetrate the mysterious agglomeration of figures in the past, and make the system for the future more simple to verify.

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When M. Venizelos took charge of the Government a new Ministry was founded dealing with trade, industry, and agriculture, and called the Ministry of National Economy. This Ministry was first given to M. Benakis, whose long experience of industrial and commercial affairs was invaluable for the exercise of his important functions. New laws provided for the appointment of departmental agricultural engineers, whose duty it was to travel about in the agricultural districts to see what was needed and to give the necessary instructions to the agriculturists, to give lectures to teachers in the schools of their districts, to inspire all with love for the land, which was sorely neglected owing to emigration. An agricultural institute and instruction in tobacco and cotton growing were among other happy results of the creation of this Ministry.

Finally, another new thing was that the

Ministry of National Economy took cognizance of the condition of the working-classes. Among the various social acts that were passed we must mention acts dealing with hygiene and workmen's insurance, with women and children's work.

M. Venizelos did not only raise the moral tone of the nation, but he also marshalled its intellectual forces.

Under a previous ministry a deputation of dramatists came one day to the then Prime Minister to beg him to support in Parliament a Bill for the protection of modern theatrical works. The statesman replied ingenuously :

“ Modern Greek drama? Is there such a thing? ”

This shows in what a narrow circle politicians moved in the old days. M. Venizelos, on the other hand, is very much interested in literature and art, and does not conceal his interest in them. He decorated literary men who had been forgotten by previous governments ; by his presence at lectures, concerts, exhibitions and theatres, he encourages artists, scholars, men of letters, knowing as he does that their works will prove that modern Greece is a



force to be reckoned with in the creative and intellectual order, though she is overshadowed by the majestic shade of her great forerunner of antiquity.

\* \* \* \*

Thus events have proved that the League's choice was a happy and healthy one for Greece. The Cretan leader brought to Athens a breath of his pure mountain air, a fresh atmosphere to revive the whole nation. Now that the Constitution is revised, old abuses swept away, the people breathe the air of liberty, justice is equal for all, and Greece, beneath the firm hand of her redeemer, marches forward to a new and glorious future.

That is why, after seventeen months of government, the people once more gave him their suffrages with the same enthusiasm (and this political enthusiasm is worth noting in a country where last phases like those of Aristides are still frequent). He was given a Chamber according to his wish, the Chamber for which he had asked in the course of a triumphant electoral campaign.

## CHAPTER III

### EUROPE OUTWITTED

At the same time that M. Venizelos was trying to put internal affairs in order, he was also planning the Balkan confederation, which will always be the triumph of his genius.

Knowing full well that any proposal of this nature would have to be heralded by the military preparation of his country, he set himself to improve the army and navy. He took over both departments himself, and together with the French and English missions, he worked away at reorganization.

The reorganization of the Greek army is the work of General Eydoux and the French Mission, who did all they possibly could by hard work to reorganize an army in eighteen months. One of the most important results obtained by the French Mission was that it gave the army confidence in itself, in its

strength and in its fighting power. The defeat of 1897 had crushed and demoralized it. The French Mission, by the improvement it effected, restored to all ranks faith and hope in the future. It was this moral side of its work which made it possible for Greece to lift up her head in the Balkans and dare all things. M. Venizelos, when Minister of War, helped the Mission in its work, and gave General Eydoux complete liberty of action.

While in 1903 the Greek effectives in time of peace only amounted to 22,341 men, and in 1904, thanks to the new military law, to 28,000, to-day Greece can put in the field at least 200,000 soldiers of the first line.

Early in 1912 the Government passed a law for the reorganization of the army on the advice of General Eydoux, whose recommendations had been studied minutely.

General Eydoux called up several classes of reservists, all the exempt untrained men of one class, that is about 10,000 men; he carried out grand manœuvres, he collected round him all the divisional and corps commanders to make them study and pursue

their instruction both by exercises on the map and by field exercises; he instituted musketry courses for infantry, practice-camps for artillery, which made foot soldiers and gunners more conversant with their arms.

Funds were raised on all sides, and particularly from the financial surplus of 1911, and made it possible to obtain the necessary material. By the close co-operation of Venizelos and General Eydoux the Greek army underwent a complete transformation, which led to the victories of the two wars of 1912 and 1913.

In May, 1912, the Greek army carried out splendid grand manœuvres, under the direction of General Eydoux. During the operations the Bulgarian and Serbian attachés would not stir an inch from the French General's side; they took note of everything, observed everything, got all the information they could for the reports that were impatiently awaited by their Governments. The Bulgarian attaché kept asking General Eydoux, "Is the Greek army really ready? How many men can Greece put in the field?"

At the end of the manœuvres the Serbian

attaché expressed to General Eydoux his profound admiration of the men and officers whom he had seen at work. Although his Bulgarian colleague said nothing we may well believe that he was of the same opinion, for as soon as his report on the manœuvres was sent in, the Greco-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance was signed on May 16, 1912, and as a corollary the Military Convention of September 22, 1912, was hurriedly signed just before the outbreak of hostilities. While as yet no one believed in the possibility of union among the four Christian nations of the peninsula, thanks to M. Venizelos, Greece had made it an accomplished fact.

It is now common knowledge that the Greek Prime Minister was the principal agent of the Balkan Alliance. M. Gueschof recognized it officially in his despatch to M. Venizelos the day after the declaration of war: "I have the pleasure of reporting to you this touching ceremony,<sup>1</sup> during which our Holy Church blessed an event which is the first of its kind that history records in the

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the religious service celebrated at Sofia for the victory of the allied armies.

Balkan peninsula. I beg you to accept my congratulations and best wishes for a happy ending to crown *the work of which the first inception is so largely due to Your Excellency and the Ministry over which you preside.*"<sup>1</sup>

The Bulgarians were to forget these words, which, when they were written, were genuinely sincere.

M. Venizelos did not want war with Turkey, as he stated openly in the Chamber after hostilities were over. He even tried to come to an understanding with her on the Cretan question at the time that the Cretan deputies were insisting upon their right of admission to Parliament. He was driven into war by the evasive policy of the Porte, and nothing else ; when he realized the uselessness of his overtures, he saw there was nothing for it but war.

<sup>1</sup> In his article on the "Confédération balkanique" (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, November 15, 1913), M. René Pinon writes: "M. Venizelos, with the help of an English newspaper correspondent, Mr. Bourchier, was, we are told, the active and intelligent agent of a Greco-Bulgarian reconciliation." The author exaggerates, we think, the part played in this alliance by the *Times* correspondent at Sofia.

The extraordinary thing is that the mobilization of the Hellenic forces and the military conventions of Greece took the foreign diplomats in Athens absolutely by surprise. Till the last moment they would not believe what was before their eyes. One of them is accredited with the following remark: "We were deceived by M. Venizelos's smile and his continually pacific speeches. We thought Greece was absorbed in internal organization. How could we imagine that she could take such a serious step without consulting Europe?"

The Powers treated all these preparations as bluff, and, what is even more astonishing, the Turkish Ambassador himself was surprised. The night before the declaration of war he was at the theatre, and he and his friends were laughing at the "comedy" of mobilization. The Prime Minister's perpetual smile and his impassive countenance had triumphed once again.

Accustomed as they were to find Greece humiliated and dispirited, the Turks continued to treat them with contempt.

On September 30, for the third time in the

course of a century, war broke out between Greece and Turkey ; Greece was at the end of her patience.

Turkish soldiers had fired on a Greek steamer at Samos, and committed grave outrages against the Hellenic flag ; the Government of Athens asked for explanations, and got no reply save cold insolence and fresh vexations ; the blue and white flag was so insulted that the Greek Cabinet, in agreement with the Allies, was driven to extremes.

On October 8 Montenegro declared war first and opened hostilities ; on October 13 the three other States handed the Porte their Notes simultaneously. M. Venizelos had first of all come to an understanding with the Diadochos, who was then regent,<sup>1</sup> but the King's consent was necessary, and he returned hurriedly to Athens.

As to what followed we will quote from M. Leune's book, *Une Etape une Revanche*, and let him tell the incident in his own words :

" On October 5 King George returned to Athens by way of Vienna. Before the royal

<sup>1</sup> George I was at Copenhagen attending the funeral of his father, the King of Denmark.



yacht *Amphitrite* arrived at the Piræus M. Venizelos was taken on board by the destroyer *Velos*. Immediately the King and Prime Minister had a long conversation. The King knew nothing of the decisions that had been arrived at in Athens. He was still firmly convinced that war could be avoided. So he replied to the President of the Council that he did not approve of what was going on.

“‘Your Majesty,’ replied M. Venizelos, ‘the Crown Prince entirely agrees with me.’

“And he repeated this sentence three times, because the King would not be convinced by his arguments.”

\* \* \* \*

The immediate cause of the Turko-Balkan War must be found in the refusal of the Turks to allow Macedonia a regular and incorrupt administration. Since 1908 the Powers had been concerned at the ill-treatment of Christians in Macedonia, and endeavoured to organize judicial administration there. But the advent of the Young-Turk regime put an end to the efforts of the Powers, and the programme of reforms was abandoned. But the Young Turks proved to

be no better than the Old Turks, and the Macedonian Christians became more and more wretched. The Balkan Sovereigns then realized that they must unite before they could stand up to the Porte.

The military and political alliance concluded between the Balkan States was the result of long negotiations. It was finally drawn up in three conventions of different dates. The first, between Serbia and Bulgaria, was signed in 1909. Russia was aware of it and gave it a favourable reception. It was followed in August, 1912, by another convention between Bulgaria and Greece, and was finally completed by a convention between Bulgaria and Montenegro. The Allies engaged themselves for twenty-five years.

The conflict between Turkey and the Balkan States became acute, for the Porte was continually persecuting the Macedonian Christians. The Young Turks had a wild idea that they could make all the inhabitants of Turkey become Turks.

In reply to the Balkan Governments, the Porte went no further than to promise the Macedonian Christians the restoration of the

old law of 1882 on the administration of villayets—a law which experience had proved to be unworkable. Events followed one another quickly. For several weeks Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece had been hurrying on their military preparations. Turkey followed suit. On October 3, 1910, the Ministers of the Allied Balkan States sent a joint Note to Constantinople demanding autonomy for Crete, for Old Serbia, Macedonia, and Albania. As it was obvious that the Porte meant to play the usual game of evasion, Montenegro, in agreement with the other Allies, declared war against Turkey on October 9. At last, on October 17, Turkey took the initiative and declared war on Bulgaria and Serbia. She still did her utmost to detach Greece from the Balkan Alliance ; she promised her Crete and did all she possibly could, but Greece had given her word, and nothing would make her go back on it.

It is common knowledge that when the Note of October 13 was handed by M. Coromilas, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Mouktar Bey, Turkish Minister at Athens, the latter read it and returned it with this comment : “ I much

regret that I cannot forward such a Note to my Government."

War had already been declared between Turkey and Bulgaria and Serbia ; while pretending to ignore Greece the Porte hoped that she would hesitate to open hostilities in her turn.

Soon M. Gryparis, the Greek Minister at Constantinople, received an order by telegram to declare war against Turkey.

At the very moment that he was embarking for Greece (October 14) an important event was taking place at Athens. The Chamber of Deputies was opening in ordinary session to receive the Cretan deputies. It was an historical day, long and eagerly awaited, and the outcome of many strenuous efforts.

In the precincts of Parliament the crowd was enormous ; within the building there was scarcely room to breathe. All of a sudden a frantic ovation was heard ; the group of Cretan deputies entered the hall. Tears of joy and emotion stood in the eyes of all present. When silence was restored the President of the Council walked up to the tribune ; deeply moved, he related the circumstances which had

induced Greece to join the other Balkan States. Then turning towards the Cretan delegates, his former friends and collaborators, the noble heroes of Akrotiri and Therisso, he exclaimed :

“ In the name of the Greek people I welcome the delegates of our Cretan brothers present within these walls.”

Prolonged applause greeted this sentence, which consecrated the longed-for union of Crete and the mother-country, and the sitting came to an end.

This time it was war indeed. In Thessaly the main Greek army, drawn up in the Plain of Larnia, marched in two columns against the Turks. The right-hand column, under the orders of the Diadochos, marched on Elassona (October 18) by the pass of Melouna and occupied it. On October 21 its advance-guards came in contact with a Turkish division at Servia, and compelled it to surrender. Meanwhile the left-hand column was marching parallel on Grevena, with Monastir as its objective. The Diadochos entered Kotzani on October 26 ; on the 29th the passes of Tripotamos, south of Veria, were forced,

and the town was captured after fierce fighting. Thence he set out with three divisions for Salonika. On November 5 and 6 his advance-guard came in contact with the Turks on the banks of the Vardar at Yenidje, and this gave time for the rest of the column and the artillery to come up. On the 7th, after a violent engagement, the Turks were thrown back on the left bank of the river, which the Greeks then crossed and entered Salonika on the 9th. The Turkish army, consisting of 25,000 men, surrendered. The army in Epirus advanced and occupied Pente-pigadia on November 15. Janina was not far off, but its fortresses and the mountainous nature of the ground presented many difficulties to the Greeks.

After the rupture of the peace negotiations in London, the Diadochos took command of the army in Epirus, and made a furious attack on Janina. By a skilful strategic manœuvre he succeeded in approaching Janina from the south-west, and became master of the town with relatively small losses.

## CHAPTER IV

### IN LONDON

THE victory of the Allies had completely demoralized the Turkish defence ; the Ottoman Government realized fully that further resistance would lead to irreparable disaster. Kiamil Pasha therefore communicated directly with the conquerors with a view to framing preliminaries of peace.

Bulgaria, whose armies were immobilized at Chataldja, at once agreed to the armistice, and so did Serbia and Montenegro. But M. Venizelos would not observe the truce, and acted thus in the interest of the Balkan cause ; for so long as the Greek fleet was watching the Ægean Sea, Turkey could not move her troops from Asia Minor across to Thrace, nor could she supply her European armies by sea.

In order not to hinder the negotiations for

peace, the Greek Minister consented to take part in them. In the evening of December 3 the Bulgarian delegates signed the armistice in their own name and in the name of Serbia and Montenegro, and chose London as the seat of the peace conference. From conversations that I had with the Balkan delegates in London, where in my capacity as a journalist I had to follow their work, I was from the first under the impression that they had come to the conference convinced that peace would not be signed. M. Venizelos had less belief in a peaceful issue than anyone ; he had said so openly to the Allies at the time of the Chataldja negotiations.

“ What good is it to go to London ? ” said he to them. “ The fogs of the English capital will not help us ; we had much better meet at Chataldja and dictate peace beneath the protection of our guns.”

They would not listen to him, and the Bulgarians were the first to repent.

\* \* \* \*

What part did M. Venizelos play in the Conference of London ?

To answer that question we should have



to look up the history of their labours, and that would entail a lengthy and detailed study of an entire volume. M. Hanofaux summed it all up in a few concise words : " What a curious organism is now at work in London ! It will add an unexpected chapter to future manuals of international law. A meeting of Ministers, a conference of Ambassadors, a party of negotiators, with or without powers according as they sit on one side or the other of a partition. Deliberations which are by way of being secret and official, but which will really be public, as they are in full view and hearing of the Press, which can incite or appease public opinion. The whole world, governments, exchanges, markets, diplomacy, one and all are hanging on this strange mechanism which is to decide between war and peace, and which is collapsing as soon as it starts."<sup>1</sup>

Such was the labyrinth through which M. Venizelos had to manœuvre. From his point of view three big questions had to be decided : peace with Turkey, an agreement with the Allies about partition, the consent

<sup>1</sup> *La Guerre des Balkans et l'Europe*, p. 201.

of the Powers to the accomplished fact. This was no small matter, for the questions of the islands and Epirus were for months a matter of dispute between the Powers and Greece.

In the chaos of private interests at stake in this affair Greece did not get all she wanted, but can we blame her Minister? The President of the Council made no mistake; his clear sight was never at fault, and he brought all his diplomacy to bear in order to get the maximum of its demands for his country. He did his utmost to make the representatives of the Powers take a just view of Greece, and to create a current of opinion in England favourable to Hellenic aspirations; the secret documents of the Conference can alone tell us how far he succeeded in this mission: but it is none the less true that, as Mr. Percy Martin says, "M. Venizelos was the central figure of the peace negotiations in which Greece eventually took part, as he had been in the direction of the war itself; he was unanimously recognized as the mouthpiece of the delegates, thanks to the entire confidence with which his abilities and his

judgment inspired the Greeks and their Allies.”<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

It was self-evident that of the five delegations the Greek group contained the best elements from every point of view.

M. Venizelos, who was at its head, was an absolute revelation to the cold and phlegmatic English. Simple and unassuming, the Cretan leader soon won all sympathies ; two inscrutable eyes gleamed through his glasses, his lips wore a perpetual smile, his sole reply to the importunate who tried to unearth his secrets.

Before he had ever left his native island, M. Venizelos could speak perfectly all the principal European languages. I shall never forget what a pleasant surprise it was to Sir Edward Grey when at the first meeting at St. James's Palace the Greek Minister replied to his speech in the most perfect English. He had polished up the language by himself at Therisso during the insurrection.

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<sup>1</sup>*La Nouvelle Grèce*, French translation of *Greece in the Twentieth Century*, p. 267.

The following anecdote will show, I think, in what high esteem M. Venizelos was held in Europe. I can guarantee its authenticity, as it was told me by an eye-witness, Signor Emmanuel, the London correspondent of the *Corriere della Sera*; he had lived in Greece during the Turko-Balkan war, and knew the Greek Prime Minister well.

Once when visiting the Italian Ambassador some time before the opening of the Conference of London, Signor Emmanuel praised M. Venizelos to the Marquis Imperiali. The Italian diplomat listened with a sceptical smile and made no reply. Shortly afterwards he had occasion to make the acquaintance of the Greek Minister, and he confessed later to the journalist :

“ You were right. I have seen M. Venizelos, and I am quite of your opinion ; I admire him and esteem him.”

\* \* \* \*

The Greek delegation stayed at Claridge's Hotel, where soon a veritable ministry sprang up ; M. Venizelos, surrounded by a numerous personnel, governed the whole of Greece from his writing table, and kept up a continual

telegraphic communication with Athens. He alone drew up the plans of diplomatic battle, and his tireless activity occupied every moment of the day.

His daily routine was as follows: In the morning after breakfast he read the foreign newspapers in order to know European opinion; then he met the allied delegates, went round to all the offices of the Commission, gave orders, and dictated documents; then he returned to his study, where M. Markantonakis, his private secretary and intimate friend, awaited him and handed him his voluminous correspondence. After a short visit to the Foreign Office, he had lunch.

He began the afternoon with a few moments' rest, followed by interviews with the Balkan delegates. When he returned to the hotel he telegraphed his instructions to the Ministers in Athens, and if there were no sittings at St. James's Palace, he received journalists in search of news.

In the evening he dined with the members of the delegation.

This was the usual routine, but often other work turned up unexpectedly, or else there

might be dinners at the Embassies, private invitations, excursions round London. All this was plenty of work for one man.

\* \* \* \*

The labours of the Conference came to nothing, thanks to the dilatory methods of the Turks, who had only one object: to gain time in the hope of fresh complications. The Turkish delegates spent their time in intrigues which they hardly took the trouble to conceal. Reschid Pasha had secret interviews with M. Daneff, while Osman Nizami Pasha went to Claridge's Hotel to try and induce M. Streit to treat separately in the name of Greece.

What were the Powers doing? None of them had the courage to intervene resolutely. Was it not wiser to let events take their course? They took it with a vengeance, and ended in a repetition of hostilities.

The sittings of the Conference of London were made to give students of political psychology an unexpected treat.

The Allies framed their proposals couched in the language of a conqueror who demands and commands.

On December 28 Reschid Pasha, the head of

the Turkish delegation, got up, and in a respectful silence communicated the Ottoman reply. Had there been a defeat? Werê the conquered speaking? No one could have guessed it, for truth to tell, Turkey was yielding practically nothing.

When the sitting had been suspended M. Venizelos said to the Ottoman delegates :

“ You forget that we are at the close of a war, and that the whole of Turkey in Europe is occupied by the armies of the Allies. We ask you for a cession of territory; you reply by talking about reforms. Reforms and territorial concession have no common factor ; all discussion is impossible.”

“ But you asked for reforms,” said Reschid Pasha. “ Now we are offering them to you.”

“ Reforms,” retorted M. Venizelos, “ were all very well before the war. Now that war is over they are quite inadequate. Is your answer final ? ”

“ I will inform my Government of the views of the Allies,” was Reschid Pasha’s reply. The sitting came to an end. The Porte sent fresh proposals, less pretentious, but still im-

possible of acceptance. The allied delegates then presented an ultimatum saying that whatever proposals Turkey might make at the sitting of January 6, 1913, "if the Turkish Government does not consent to give satisfaction on all the points included in the Note presented by the Allies on the previous day, they would immediately break off negotiations and four days later hostilities would begin again."

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The last sitting of the Conference at St. James's was particularly stormy. Sick to death of Turkish policy, the Balkan deputies were determined to be done with it; they therefore instructed M. Novakovitch to say in their name that as Turkey's proposals did not agree with the demands of the Allies, and as the negotiations on the new basis were not likely to come to an understanding, the allied delegates felt compelled to suspend the Conference.

"The sitting is adjourned," added M. Novakovitch.

"I demand a hearing," cried Reschid Pasha.

"I regret that I must repeat to Your



Excellency that the sitting is adjourned," repeated M. Novakovitch.

"These proceedings are most irregular. You can declare that the negotiations are broken off, but you have no right to suspend them; I demand that the sitting shall continue."

"What we have done," replied M. Venizelos, "we have done with our eyes open. We are at a deadlock. If you consider our proceedings equivalent to a rupture you are at liberty to say so and to accept the consequences. If Your Excellency has any proposal to make us of a nature to further the conclusion of the affair that we have come here to discuss, you can tell us in private. If the proposal should justify the resumption of the sitting, we shall not need to be told twice; but the complete acceptance of our conditions alone will satisfy us."

"This is contrary to all Parliamentary usage," objected Reschid Pasha.

"You forget that here we are not in Parliament," replied M. Venizelos ironically.

Such was the epilogue of the Conference of Saint James; peace was not signed till long

## FAILURE OF THE CONFERENCE 99

afterwards, and then only under ill-concealed pressure from the Powers. The Treaty of London has, moreover, only an historical value ; it was superseded after the second Balkan war by private agreements between the Allied States and the Ottoman Empire.

## CHAPTER V

### DANEFF AND VENIZELOS

MOST of the delegates left London as soon as the negotiations were broken off, and among them went M. Venizelos; fresh difficulties over the partition of conquered territory required his return to Athens.

The attitude of Bulgaria, especially that of M. Daneff, the head of the Macedonian party, was so uncompromising that it was obvious to the most short-sighted that the intention of the Bulgarian Government was to become the Prussia of the East. Already in London there were many incidents which showed that grave dissensions were imminent. I was so fortunate in my capacity as a journalist as to hear from the President of the Council himself the story of a sharp dispute that he had had with M. Daneff, which gave him a chance of unmasking Bulgaria's real attitude on the subject of Salonika.

It took place on the famous day that the Balkan delegates, weary of the dilatory policy of the Turks, broke off negotiations by adjourning the sitting in spite of the protests of Reschid Pasha.

Just as I was going into M. Venizelos's study to interview him on the situation of the moment, M. Daneff came out. The President of the Sobranjé did not often go and see the Greek Prime Minister, and when he did so he took care to be accompanied by someone else, so as to avoid all possibility of discussing the question of Salonika. But times were difficult; M. Daneff had to see M. Venizelos about the *coup d'état* of the previous day, and that day he came to Claridge's Hotel unattended.

When I saw the President of the Council, I instantly realized that the interview had been a serious one; M. Venizelos was pale and excited; he had lost his usual cool self-control. His first words were:

"M. Daneff and I have been speaking about Salonika."

This was the first time that he had unbent to me; till then he had always declined to answer my questions on this matter. I was

therefore very much astonished that he should open the subject ; my astonishment increased when he enlarged on it still more :

“ When we had finished our discussion on yesterday’s sitting, M. Daneff rose to leave. I said to him point-blank :

“ ‘ As we are alone, let us talk about Salonika.’

“ Much embarrassed and on tenterhooks he replied :

“ ‘ This is hardly the moment.’

“ ‘ Still we have a little time in which to settle the foundations of our future discussions.’

“ ‘ I have received no instructions from my Government ; I know nothing about the business.’

“ At this point I could not resist saying sharply :

“ ‘ Let us talk seriously, and try to arrange matters.’

“ ‘ With pleasure ; but Salonika is at this moment in the hands of the armies. Politics have nothing to do with it now ; we will speak of it after peace has been signed with Turkey.’

“ We were both standing near the door. Summoning all my self-control I replied :

“ ‘ Salonika is not in the hands of the armies,

but under the Government of the King of Greece. Salonika belongs to Greece by historical right and by the right of conquest. And I can tell you this. Greece will consent to any other sacrifice in order to maintain the Balkan Alliance—but give up Salonika. Never. Never! . . .’”

“And what did M. Daneff reply?” said I.  
 “Nothing.”

I do not know whether the two diplomats ever reopened the subject afterwards. The Prime Minister never mentioned it to me again. He would not have done so that day had his patriotic indignation not led him away to speak in my presence.

\* \* \* \*

M. Venizelos has been blamed for having for one instant contemplated the sacrifice of Salonika in order to maintain the Balkan confederation; we have just refuted this accusation. Throughout the period preceding the second war, the President of the Council maintained an attitude of calm moderation and compromise, with the two-fold aim of saving the League and keeping Salonika for his country.

An incomprehensible megalomania urged the Bulgarians to a breach. On several occasions their troops had committed hostile acts against the Serbs and the Greeks. Early in June they attacked the advanced posts of the Greek army at Pangheion and Elifthérai. In face of these threats Greece and Serbia drew their alliance still closer, and at the same time tried to find an amicable solution of the quarrel.

It may be asked why M. Venizelos had not provided for the terms of the partition. We must not forget that when the war of liberation began, no one could foresee the consequences for the simple reason that no one believed that Turkey would collapse as she did. The Allies aimed at no more than the autonomy of Macedonia; they could not foresee the importance of the booty which was to fall to them.

M. Venizelos did what he could to avoid the second Balkan war, as he declared to the Chamber in a speech which will always remain not only a model of wise and lofty eloquence, but also an invaluable document for the history of these two wars.

## CHAPTER VI

### WAR BETWEEN THE ALLIES

ON June 11, 1913, the Tsar sent a telegram to the Kings of Serbia and Bulgaria warning them of the consequences of a fratricidal war. As M. Venizelos was most desirous to maintain both peace and the Balkan Alliance, he accepted the Tsar's arbitration and Serbia followed suit. But the Bulgarian Government was determined that the delegates at St. Petersburg should be confronted with the accomplished fact; and it was decided to make for Salonika and drive the Serbs from the strategic points in their occupation.

The fratricidal war broke out on Bulgaria's initiative; history will show who was responsible for this aggression, the King, the Government, or the Bulgarian Staff; at all events it was the sequel to two telegrams from the General Headquarters at Sofia.

On June 29 the Bulgarian armies were



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ordered to attack the Allies, in the hopes of cutting off the Serbs from the Greeks on the Vardar. This "offensive brusquée" on the part of General Ivanof was successful, but soon the Greek and Serbian armies recovered and dealt a blow at their enemy. At the same time the Roumanian army advanced on Bulgarian territory, and on July 20 it had already crossed the Danube and was on the way to Sofia.

On July 13 the Turkish army also took the field, and on the 23rd occupied Kilkitch and then Adrianople.

Already by July 8 Bulgaria saw that the case was hopeless and asked Russia to mediate. But the Allies wanted to crush her, and it was only on July 21, after King Ferdinand had sent a telegram to the King of Roumania asking that hostilities on the part of all the Allies should cease, that it was decided to summon a conference at Bucharest to negotiate the terms of peace.

The Conference met on July 30; on August 6 an agreement was reached, and on August 10 it was embodied in a treaty of peace composed of several reciprocal conventions.

The Greco-Bulgarian Treaty determined that the frontier of the two States should start from Klath, follow the line of the summit of Mont Vrondi and the Boz-Dagh, leaving Drama, Demirhisar, and Seres to Greece; it would then turn eastwards, cut across the Mestos, and just before reaching Xanthi would join the course of the Mestos to its mouth in the Ægean sea, leaving Kavalla to Greece.

The entry of Roumania into the lists had been a new factor in the struggle. As King Charles said to the correspondent of the *Matin*, "Roumania could admire the Bulgarian soldiers but could not give her approval to the policy pursued by the Cabinet of Sofia." The mobilization of the Roumanian armies had made the position of Bulgaria untenable; she had either to yield or disappear from the map. King Ferdinand preferred to yield and treat for peace.

The first meeting of the victors took place in Uskub. After an hour's conversation, M. Pashitch and M. Venizelos agreed upon their reply to Russia, who was proposing that hostilities should cease. The Allies expressed

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to the Government of St. Petersburg their gratitude for its intervention, but stated that though they were ready to negotiate directly with Bulgaria, they could not suspend operations.

The Greek Prime Minister returned to Athens from Uskub. On his way through Salonika, M. G. Bourdon, correspondent of the *Figaro*, had an interview with him which shows what were the anxieties of the Greek representative at this period. M. Bourdon writes :

“ M. Venizelos, who had arrived the night before from Uskub, where he had met M. Pashitch, and was shortly going on board a destroyer to be conveyed back to Athens, was so good as to take me in a motor-car for a drive round the outskirts of Salonika. I said to him :

“ ‘ Are you not afraid that the Powers may bring pressure to bear upon Greece so that Bulgaria should keep the port of Kavalla, which you are occupying ? ’

“ At this, he compressed his lips and turned pale.

“ ‘ I hope,’ he replied with a little shudder, ‘ that no one will be found to suggest such a

possibility.' Then with some warmth he added : ' How could anyone dare to ask us to give up the life and fate of people of our race to men who can only exterminate and devastate. A question of civilization is at stake. We shall not abandon men of our tongue and of our race to the fury of the conquered.'

" This was said with a force and feeling that were most striking."

\* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the Daneff Ministry had been replaced by the Radoslavoff Cabinet ; on July 21 the Turks returned to Adrianople. The same day, King Ferdinand sent a telegram to King Charles announcing that two Bulgarian delegates had been sent to Nish with full powers to arrange peace with Greece and Serbia, and begging him to stop the advance of the Roumanian troops.

The Allies immediately agreed on the terms of an armistice, and at King Charles's request the seat of the Conference was moved to Bucharest, whither M. Venizelos betook himself on July 26.

At this point we think it may be of interest

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to reproduce the impressions which were communicated to the *Figaro* by M. Gaston Deschamps, then in Athens. They describe the departure of M. Venizelos and show the gratitude of the Greeks towards the man who was their redeemer:

“During the afternoon of July 26, two Frenchmen, whom a happy fate and a legitimate curiosity had brought from Athens to the Piræus, were witnesses of a scene which was quite unique. One of these two travellers, M. Gustave Fougères, the eminent Director of the French School at Athens, had to embark that same evening for Delos. Meanwhile he had some sunny hours to spare while he waited for the deliberate little steamer to start, which was to take him across the blue waters of the Gulf of Myrto to the enchanted regions where gleams the most famous of the Cyclades. He and his companion sat down in the square under the shade of the plane trees, where waiters from the neighbouring cafés dispensed raki and fresh water in the open air, in the gentle wind, and alas! in the all-pervading dust. . . . All of a sudden an unusual flutter woke the town,

## M. VENIZELOS'S POPULARITY III

almost asleep in the torrid heat of a very hot day. The little newspaper boys waved the last editions of their printed sheets, and ran as hard as they could in all directions, crying in shrill voices :

“ ‘ He is coming! He is coming! ’ ”

“ ‘ Who? ’ asked some passers-by, not yet acquainted with the news of the day, or not quite awake from their midday siesta.

“ And those astonishing little boys of Athens and the Piræus, who are as intelligent and quick and amusing as in the days of Themistocles, kept on running—like Achilles, fleet of foot—repeating in a chorus of childish voices and shrill falsettos, with high piercing notes in the echoing air : ‘ Venizelos! Venizelos! ’ ”

“ This scene, thrown into relief by the clear light of an eastern sky, under the eternal azure of Attica, was most picturesque, and ancient and modern at the same time. A motor car came in sight on the new road from Athens which winds along the coast and follows the pleasant curves of Phalerum Bay. To be able to discover the presence of the Prime Minister in that carefully closed carriage with its blinds down, might be supposed to require

that gift of second sight which seems to incite the foolish to occult research in the city of clear-eyed Pallas.

“The motor car which had been pointed out in the distance to the eager gaze of the population of the Piræus was different from the vehicles used habitually to convey officials. It was a motor ambulance. On its grey sides appeared the Red Cross. . . . Why did M. Venizelos come to the Piræus in this more than humble conveyance? Rumour soon told us. The day had been fixed for the departure of the President of the Council to Bucharest, to settle conditions of peace to end the war waged so successfully by the heroic Greeks. A destroyer of the royal navy was awaiting him in the military port, where he was to embark for Salonika to join the headquarters of King Constantine and continue his way to Roumania. But on the way from Athens, not far from Phalerum and Munychia, a slight accident, one of those lucky ‘break-downs’ which happily have no influence upon the course of history, compelled the chauffeur of the ministerial car to come to a stop in the open country. What was to be

done? Time was short. The destroyer had steam up. Dusk was approaching. Already the sun was setting in the west, and the rocky slopes of Ægina and Salamis were turning pink, lilac and mauve. . . . An ambulance car approached, one of those cars that Doctor Arnaud, the Principal Medical Officer of the French army, Director of the Medical Service in the Hellenic army, had mobilized for the duration of the war. This car, driven by a soldier with a Red Cross brassard, was on its way to the Piræus to fetch the wounded brought by the hospital ship *Ionia*. M. Venizelos without more ado took advantage of the opportunity. But some passers-by had seen him. He was obliged to forfeit his incognito, which suits his modesty and his energy, for he is a hard-working man, too much occupied with his 'idea,' too intent on the true interests of his country, to waste time seeking tumultuous applause, and those noisy acclamations which smaller men, less sure apparently of their popularity, look upon as sure signs of popular sympathy. He could not avoid the ovation which awaited him on the quay of the Piræus, as he embarked. All



the same I think he cannot have regretted very deeply the little accident which had thus exposed him to the public eye.

“It was a very touching and very sober demonstration ; to me it expressed the spontaneous gratitude of a whole nation to one who was labouring hard for national greatness. There was no useless enthusiasm, no superfluous clamour. It was more reverent, a mute outburst of grateful affection towards the statesman, who, having in a tragic moment counted the cost, consulted his conscience, and chosen the right moment for decisive resolutions, assumed the most fearful responsibilities without flinching. The people thronged about him to welcome him and thank him. They wished him God-speed. They did not ask for a speech, for they knew that his time was precious. This sort of restraint from a people who love oratorical skill above all things was more significant than any wordy protests. When he left the car in front of the *démarchia*, they left him to talk to the *démarchos* (mayor) of the Piræus and the deputies of Attica who had come to bid him farewell. When the pinnace from the Arsenal

## POPULAR SYMPATHY

put off from the quay to go out to the destroyer, the crowd, seeing their Minister leaving them so simply and proudly beneath the blue and white flag, the symbol of a free Greece, to settle the terms of peace, after having organized with untiring energy the great effort required by two wars of national liberation, shouted with one voice :

“‘Long live our nation!’

“‘Long live Venizelos!’

“‘Long live Greater Greece!’

“He went off thus, the mouthpiece of the nation which had given him its entire confidence. He was calm and gentle as usual, very quiet in word and gesture, revealing only by the smile that lightened his grave and thoughtful face, all the emotion pent up within his heart. On his way the boatmen of the port rowed after him as hard as they could and stood up in their boats to say a few friendly greetings of happy augury and good wishes, with that touch of cordial familiarity which in a Greek is perfectly respectful:

“‘Good-bye!’

“‘A good passage!’

“‘Let the peace be worthy of our country!’

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while some voices, as though repeating a prayer, in slow and solemn intonation said from time to time :

“ ‘May God be with you!’ ”

From Salonika the President of the Council went to Hadji-Beylik, where the King of Greece had his headquarters. For many hours Constantine XII and M. Venizelos worked at their common task to draw up a map of new Greece. Then they agreed upon the minimum of Greek demands to be put forward at Bucharest.

An officer who was present told me that during these conversations and the dinner that followed, both King and Prime Minister wore happy and satisfied expressions. As he was leaving, the Sovereign shook M. Venizelos by the hand and said :

“ Good-bye. A speedy return with our beautiful daughter Kavalla! ”

“ That I promise you, Sir! ”

The same night, smiling and tireless as ever, the Greek Prime Minister started for Bucharest, where fresh labours awaited him.

## CHAPTER VII

### JONESCO AND VENIZELOS

BEFORE we deal with the Conference of Bucharest, which embodies some of M. Venizelos's finest work, I will say a few words about the previous relations between Greece and Roumania.

A rupture of Greco-Roumanian relations had been brought about some years previously by short-sighted policy: the affair of the Koutzo-Walachians<sup>1</sup> of Macedonia had been

<sup>1</sup> There are Roumanians scattered about the north of Greece from Thrace to Epirus and across Macedonia. They are called Koutzo-Walachians, apparently because they speak a "halting" Roumanian dialect (*Koutzos* in modern Greek means halting or lame). Whence do they come and what are they doing in the mountains of Pindus and Rhodope? The problem has been much discussed. Personally, I think they are Roumanized, thanks to the skilful propaganda carried on in these regions by the Roumanians, who hope to make a zone of influence in Macedonia in case of a partition of this Turkish province among the Balkan States. The Koutzo-

the occasion for it. In itself, this dispute was not worthy of much attention ; the position of some tens of thousands of shepherds scattered about Pindus was not of great moment to the future masters of Macedonia. But Roumania wanted to have her say in the final settlement, and therefore carried on a skilful propaganda in the Koutzo-Walachian regions.

Naturally this annoyed Greece ; gradually the rift widened, and hostile acts were committed. No sooner was M. Venizelos in power than he realized that it was in the Greek interest to effect a reconciliation with Rou-

Walachians, who are mostly shepherds, profess the orthodox religion as the Greeks do, and their offices are sung in Greek. The Greeks and Roumanians were always quarrelling about these nomad shepherds. But in 1905 the Roumanians contrived to secure an iradeh from the Sultan Abdul Hamid granting to the Koutzo-Walachians the right to speak Roumanian and to teach it to their children in the schools kept by Roumanian priests and teachers. Naturally this propaganda was prejudicial to Greek rights and interests over the Koutzo-Walachians living in the Greek zone of influence in Macedonia. Both countries, Greece and Roumania, exaggerated their importance. It needed the wisdom of two men, M. Venizelos and M. Jonesco, to settle this difference. To-day the Koutzo-Walachian question has ceased to exist. The Treaty of Bucharest granted to the Koutzo-Walachians the right to have schools, churches, and a bishop of their own, to recite their offices in Roumanian and to nominate their own mouktars or mayors.

mania ; during the negotiations in London he took the opportunity of coming to an understanding with M. Mission, the Roumanian Minister, to settle the basis of an agreement, a basis which was afterwards approved by M. Jonesco.

The latter had travelled all the way to London to settle the frontier question with Bulgaria. M. Daneff's policy made the negotiations come to nothing, but M. Venizelos had made good use of his time by securing Roumania's friendship in case of war between the Allies.

This is yet another proof of the Greek Minister's foresight. The interview between the Greek and Roumanian statesmen took place at the Roumanian legation. The diplomat to whom I owe these details said to me :

" It is curious to note that from the very first a great friendship sprang up between these two politicians ; their esteem and trust were mutual ; they were born to understand each other and to work together.

" M. Venizelos was loyal and frank ; he recognized Roumania's rights over the Koutzo-

Walachians, and he blamed the short-sighted attitude of Greece on the matter. Then he added :

“‘Recent events have changed the face of the Balkans ; Greece and Roumania are the only non-Slav countries in the Peninsula ; it is all to their interest to come to an understanding. What is dividing them? The Koutzo-Walachian affair? I give you my word that we are disposed to grant them every possible liberty.’

“M. Jonesco was equally frank and well-disposed ; in face of this loyal speech he realized the possibility and interest of a Greco-Roumanian friendship. He replied :

“‘You may rest assured of my philhellenic feelings. I will submit your suggestions to the King of Roumania and his Prime Minister, and I have no doubt that they will recognize the value of an understanding with Greece.’ ”

Matters remained in this state for the time being. M. Venizelos then thought that the Allies would come to some arrangement about the partition, and that the struggle would not come to a head till three or four years later. So he took no further steps, as other difficulties

required his attention elsewhere. But the basis of an understanding had been laid.

When he returned to Bucharest after the hitch in the negotiations, M. Jonesco communicated this conversation to King Charles and M. Majoresco. Roumania was inclined to temporize; she did not want to tie herself down, and she took no action in reply to M. Venizelos's advances.

But the turn of events brought the two countries nearer together. On May 14 Greece and Serbia signed a treaty of alliance at Salonika. On this occasion M. Venizelos told M. Pashitch of his conversation in London with M. Jonesco; the two Prime Ministers agreed to ask Roumania to define her attitude in the event of a war with Bulgaria, and M. Venizelos applied to M. Jonesco, as the two following telegrams prove. The first is addressed by the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Greek Minister at Bucharest, the second is the latter's reply to M. Coromilas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> T. Djuvara, *Cent projets de partage de la Turquie*. Paris, 1914; p. 574.



"Athens, June 13, 1913.

"I beg you to see M. Jonesco and make the following communication to him from M. Venizelos : The present moment is a critical one for the future of the Peninsula, and Roumania cannot be indifferent to the prospect of a war between the Allies nor to its ultimate result. Roumania could prevent war by adopting a firm attitude at Sofia, and she could also prevent a more extensive alteration of the Balkan balance of power, in which she cannot but be interested.

"By safeguarding peace she will acquire considerable international prestige ; by coming to an ~~under~~<sup>understanding</sup> with Greece and Serbia she would ensure the issue of a possible war with Bulgaria, and in that way would contribute to the overthrow in decisive fashion of the openly-expressed ambitions of that country for the hegemony of the Balkans.

"Furthermore, it is an invaluable opportunity for Roumania to ensure a more radical improvement of her frontier with Bulgaria, for by taking part in the war she would not be opposed to . . .

"I am aware that M. Take Jonesco does not

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direct the external politics of Roumania, but neither does M. Venizelos direct immediately the external politics of Greece. My present communication is, therefore, of a semi-official and quite friendly character. It might assume an official tone as soon as the effort made by Greece for an understanding awoke a favourable echo from the Roumanian Government."

" Bucharest, June 15, 1913.

" I have the honour to inform you that M. Take Jonesco received me at midnight on his return from Constantza. I handed him the communication from His Excellency the President of the Council, and we had a long ~~inte~~ view. M. Take Jonesco begged me to reply in his name that he fully agrees with M. Venizelos that the mobilization of Roumania would have the object of forcing peace upon Bulgaria and ensuring the balance of power of the Balkan Peninsula ; that in any case Roumania would not co-operate with Bulgaria to the detriment of Greece and Serbia and that M. Bratiano is of the same opinion. M. Take Jonesco added that mobilization has been postponed owing to a telegram from H.M. the Emperor of Russia,

but will be carried out if Bulgaria should make trouble."

This reply was encouraging for Greece and Serbia. It was the natural consequence of the interview between M. Venizelos and M. Jonesco in London, when the foundations were laid for the co-operation of the two countries.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AT BUCHAREST

It was obvious that the peace negotiations were going to be laborious and difficult. Like the skilful diplomat that he is, M. Venizelos took care to prepare the ground in the most careful manner. He had to overcome all the prejudices which were rife in official circles at Bucharest. At the moment that the Greek delegation set foot in Roumania the turn of events was unfavourable if not actually hostile to Hellenism : the fate of Kavalla had been decided, but not in accordance with the wishes of Greece. Roumania wanted the war to end at all hazards ; the cholera scare, which was cleverly exploited in the Roumanian country districts by Bulgarian agents, was not calculated to make matters drag on. Things had to move quickly, and if necessary Kavalla would have to be given up to Bulgaria.

These words sum up Roumanian policy, and

public opinion expressed itself through the Press in entire agreement on this matter. This was the general situation when the Prime Minister arrived at Bucharest, determined to obtain the line from Nestos or to continue the war. While thousands of Roumanians were welcoming his arrival at Bucharest he must have been wondering inwardly whether he might not have to leave the town without accomplishing his purpose.

The work done by M. Venizelos in London is as nothing compared to what he achieved at Bucharest. Roumanian political circles were not favourable to Greece ; diplomats had to be seen and brought to view things in a proper light. Public opinion was misinformed ; it had to have its eyes opened, and a movement towards Hellenic sympathies had to be created. The Press was not well-disposed ; it was urgently necessary that its attitude should be modified. M. Venizelos achieved all this in a few days ; his personal charm, his captivating speech defeated the most determined resistance ; he literally conquered the people and public opinion, and he contrived most marvellously to gather round him in favour of the

Greek demands all the politicians of Roumania, whether they belonged to the Government or to the Opposition.

On two occasions he met M. Bratiano, who was nominally leader of the Opposition, though by reason of his great influence over public opinion he was virtually Prime Minister. He also saw M. Majoresco, who was then in power.

When he met the Roumanian Prime Minister, the Greek statesman said to him categorically :

“ There is no quarrel between Greece and Roumania. The Koutzo-Walachian affair? There is no such thing ; we are prepared to satisfy all your wishes. To prove to you how well-disposed we are, I will make you a proposal : I know that you have signed an agreement with Bulgaria on this subject. Very well then. I undertake to accept it as it stands for the Greek Koutzo-Walachians.”

He adopted the same tone of loyalty and sincerity to M. Bratiano.

“ What does Greece ask ? ” said M. Venizelos. “ She is victorious and yet her claims are reasonable. We ask for nothing but a

just and lasting peace, and that is only possible on the basis of the Balkan balance of power."

He repeated the statement that he had presented to M. Jonesco in London six months before. Further, he entirely agreed with King Charles, who desired for his country the hegemony of the Balkans. Four days before peace was signed the Sovereign said to M. Politis, one of the Greek deputies :

"I am convinced that peace will be made and that you will get Kavalla."

We must not omit the Kaiser's intervention ; but has not its importance been exaggerated ? It is well known that it was M. Blondel, the French Minister at Bucharest, who determined the attitude that the French Republic should adopt on this subject ; if France had not made representations, Russia would have persisted in her wish that Bulgaria should have Kavalla. Under these circumstances of what account were the German Emperor's wishes ?

\* \* \* \*

But this was not all ; M. Venizelos had at the same time to fight against other influences

which were intervening in a manner hostile to Greece over the Kavalla affair, and they very nearly won general approval. At one moment it was suggested that the most favourable solution for Greece would be to leave the question to the decision of Europe.

With new courage the Greek leader began the struggle afresh, and continued it till his perseverance was crowned with success. Then at last his expression resumed its characteristic smile, and those around him felt convinced that peace would be concluded, that Kavalla would belong to Greece and that any idea of revising the treaty of peace would be abandoned.

The first sitting took place on July 30, and was confined to the customary formalities. At four o'clock in the afternoon the delegates met at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and M. Majoresco instantly proposed as a "duty of humanity" that there should be a truce. The meeting accepted his proposal, and agreed on a five days' suspension of operations. No more was done that day.

In order to simplify and hasten on the work, as the Greeks and Serbs had declared that they



would not agree to a prolongation of the truce, M. Majoresco proposed to the delegates a system of separate conversations, where questions of detail would be decided, and of which the outcome would be communicated at the general sitting.

The Bulgarians accepted with pleasure a method which gave them an unexpected opportunity for carrying out their tactics of dividing their enemies; they lost no time, and instantly informed M. Majoresco that they were disposed to make all possible concessions in order to get the support of Roumania. But the Roumanian Minister did not reply.

Then came the turn of the Greeks and Serbs. To the latter M. Tontchef spoke about the community of Slav origin; to the former he showed how essential Kavalla was to Bulgaria.

"One port for each province," replied M. Venizelos, "is a luxury with which the Austrian Empire dispenses, since it has only Trieste. You must give up this claim or we shall never agree to peace. Kavalla must belong to Greece at all costs."

M. Tontchef insisted, and decried the value of Dedeagatch as a port.

"Yet you cannot deny," replied M. Venizelos, "that it is at Dedeagatch that the three lines from Salonika, Adrianople and Constantinople converge, which shows the importance and the commercial value of this port. Kavalla, on the contrary, is about thirty miles from the railway, and is shut in by mountains like a funnel, which would make the construction of a connecting line a very difficult matter. Dedeagatch may not be a good port, but then Kavalla must be quite primitive."

"I can only hope," replied M. Tontchef, "that that is not final. I beg you to think the matter over once more. I can assure you that Bulgaria is very well-disposed, and would on the whole prefer that the Bulgarians of Macedonia should pass under Hellenic suzerainty than under Serbian domination, where they will be completely assimilated."

A smile was M. Venizelos's only reply, and the interview came to an end.

\* \* \* \*

The next day M. Tontchef tried his separating tactics on the Roumanians.

“ We will grant you all that you ask of us, but do not allow the Greeks and Serbs to annihilate Bulgaria.”

Unfortunately for him the Allies had informed each other of their conversations of the preceding evening, and they were on the look-out.

That evening the Serbs and Greeks met and drew up a list of demands ; at the same time they decided that they would always be together during their conversations with the Bulgarians. Therefore the next morning, Friday, at ten o'clock, they arrived together at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to meet the Bulgarians and acquaint them with their proposals. This meeting had been arranged by the Bulgarians, who had invited the Serbs alone, and were only expecting to receive the Serbian demands. They were therefore much surprised to see the Greeks come in. When the first awkward moment was over M. Politis read the document.

The Allies demanded as their frontier the course of the River Struma from the former Turko-Bulgarian frontier to the River Sarb-dere, its tributary ; thence under hill 1314, the

line ran to the summit of Mount Chengel, and then followed the watershed eastward as far as Stragach, and then turned north and north-west towards hill 1152; then it crossed the River Mesta (Kara-Su) as far as Kukes, and passing through Sibkova and Daliboska, reached the watershed up to hill 2162, near Mount Kushlar. From this point it followed the direction of the Chegdada chain, passing through Morgazan, then through Megona and Tokadjida, and then to Mount Kordjala; thence it turned southwards, crossed Kaf-laksepe and Galirertofe, and reached the Ægean Sea a quarter of a mile east of Makri, leaving Dedeagatch to the Bulgarians.

Bulgaria was to give up all claims to all the islands of the Ægean Sea.

An indemnity was to be granted to the inhabitants, and all disputed questions relating to the Serbo-Bulgarian frontier were to be settled.

The maintenance of the liberty of the Greek schools, churches and communities in Thrace was to be guaranteed.

"Impossible," exclaimed M. Tontchef. "You are asking for the moon."

“ Happily we are only asking for things of this earth,” replied M. Venizelos. “ Think it over, and ask for your instructions. We will await your reply.”

\* \* \* \*

The full assembly opened at four o'clock, and came to no conclusion : on the proposal of M. Majoresco, the discussion was adjourned till the next day in the hopes that the belligerents would by then have defined their proposals. But no such thing ; the Bulgarians proposed the same solution as before the war, by which they would keep Egri-Palanka, Kratovo, Kochana, Shtip, Strumnitza, Doiran, Serès, Demirhisar and Kavalla.

M. Pashitch and M. Venizelos announced that these counter-proposals could not be accepted ; Bulgaria seemed to forget that there had been a war, and that the former state of affairs had been considerably modified.

“ We have no time to begin Turkey's little game again,” said M. Venizelos. “ Those proposals are not serious and cannot be discussed.”

Finally, to help forward the work of the Conference, M. Pashitch proposed that the new Serbo-Bulgarian frontier should follow

the line Tzarevoselo-Butkov. M. Venizelos declared for his part that he would limit Greek demands to the Bay of Lagos.

At the request of the Bulgarian delegates, an accurate outline of the new boundaries was handed to them that same evening.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DUEL FOR KAVALLA

THE next morning, Sunday, the Bulgarians and Roumanians signed their separate protocols. M. Simeon Radeff, one of the Bulgarian delegates, a publicist well known for his anti-Hellenic propaganda in Macedonia, made the following imprudent remark as he was leaving M. Majoresco :

“ Now the thing is done. The Roumanians have got what they want ; we can do as we like with the Greeks and Serbs.”

This speech irritated the Roumanian Cabinet to the last degree, and they instantly replied by a categorical assertion of solidarity. “ Really we must give those people a sharp lesson,” exclaimed M. Majoresco.

Confronted by this attitude on the part of the Roumanians, in the afternoon, the Bulgarians abandoned their counter-proposals, only retaining the one concerning Kavalla. M. Tontchef again spoke on the vital importance of this port to Bulgaria. M. Ivantchef

took up the same burden, appealing to the love of nations, the spirit of equity, the common ideal of civilization.

"Do not take from Bulgaria," said he, "the hope of a Balkan *entente*; a one-sided peace will arouse everlasting hatred. In your own interests be moderate."

"I congratulate you on your great ability as an advocate," interrupted M. Venizelos. "But you are speaking prematurely. Leave time to do its own work. The wounds are too deep for us to hope that they will heal quickly, or that we can soon be friends. Let the future alone, and let us discuss the present and Kavalla . . ."

The bitter words of M. Venizelos were provoked by his disgust with the incessant intrigues of the Bulgarian deputies. M. Ivantchef would not consider himself beaten:

"I confess," said he, "that as an advocate I am far surpassed by the Hellenic President of Council. But we have not come here to make demands; we allow that we are defeated, and we only ask that you make our regeneration possible for us and do not stifle us."

At this point M. Venizelos could contain himself no longer. He realized that the Bulgarians



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were trying to exploit the sympathies of the Roumanian delegates, and he burst out :

“ You are exaggerating. You are not yet defeated, and the result of the war is not yet decided. You can go on with it if you choose.”

The Bulgarians realized that their game was up and they began to discuss seriously.

A long discussion arose between Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbs on the question of balance of power ; M. Venizelos put an end to it by saying that the controversy was purely academic.

They passed on to the subject of the islands.

After various dissertations the Bulgarians ended by saying that they were really only interested in Thasos : that was the point towards which M. Venizelos, by skilful tactics, wanted to bring them. He replied :

“ Thasos is the annex of Kavalla. Whoever holds Kavalla must have Thasos. If, as a result of these negotiations, you get Kavalla, I give an assurance that I will not dispute the possession of Thasos.”

Upon the question of indemnity to the civilian victims, the Bulgarians declared that to insert a clause of this kind into the treaty of

peace would hurt their pride, but they would not refuse to have a separate agreement on the subject. M. Venizelos asserted that the form was immaterial, but that he would not give up the principle of compensation to the unfortunate civilian victims.

Finally a long technical discussion ensued over a religious and educational guarantee to the Greeks in Thrace. M. Venizelos accepted reciprocity of educational guarantees easily reconcilable with Greek laws, but he pointed out the material impossibility of admitting the investiture of priests by the Bulgarian exarchate on Greek territory.

The discussion proceeded no further that day.

\* \* \* \*

The negotiations were not getting on ; they had still not got beyond Kavalla. Once again the Bulgarians tried to separate the Allies by treating with the Roumanians and Serbs apart from the Greeks. In the evening after that famous sitting M. Tontchef visited the delegates of Roumania and Serbia, and spoke to them as follows :

“ Peace is virtually signed between us, since we are agreed on all points ; it is only

Greece that is uncompromising. What would you do if we were obliged to break off negotiations with her and go away without signing the peace? "

M. Pashitch replied :

"We cannot make peace without the Greeks. If you cannot come to an agreement with them, we shall take their side."

Disillusion number one. The second was still more cruel.

"If the fighting begins again we shall be in Sofia in four and twenty hours," said M. Majoresco.

That was the end ; the whole erection of diplomatic intrigues collapsed hopelessly. They had to yield. The next day, moreover, the suspension of hostilities expired, and it had already been prolonged for three days.

If the Roumanians reached Sofia it would mean revolution, the fall of the King, chaos ; the Bulgarian delegates weighed all the chances, they saw they had lost the game, and they gave in.

## CHAPTER X

### PEACE

WE have now come to the crucial moment.

In the morning Serbia had handed the Bulgarians her final proposals, giving the choice of two concessions: either Malesh or Strumnitza.

The Greeks had also handed in their final concessions that same morning:

1. The line of the Mesta (Kara-Su)—Nestos, with a slight bend towards the East for reasons of strategical defence.

2. An offer of reciprocity of compensation to the Greek and Bulgarian civilian populations conformable to the Hague Convention.

3. An offer to treat later on the question of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Macedonia.

The Bulgarians adjourned their reply to three o'clock for the Serbs and four o'clock for the Greeks. However, during his conversations in the morning M. Venizelos de-

clared that the territorial concessions which he had made were final, and that it was impossible for him to telegraph to the King for any further ones. This statement, made with the utmost frankness, produced a great effect.

At three o'clock the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement was settled. At four o'clock the Greco-Bulgarian difference had not yet come to an end.

In spite of this the full assembly of the Conference met at five o'clock; the Bulgarians persisted in their claim to Kavalla in the face of everything and everybody.

Finally, M. Majoresco made this categorical statement :

“ You must pay no attention to instigation from outside ; the armistice will expire and cannot be renewed. This sitting must be decisive ; you will not leave here till peace is signed.”

None the less, the discussion raged between the Greeks and Bulgarians ; they fought from five o'clock to eight. M. Venizelos was indefatigable ; in spite of the overwhelming heat he argued tenaciously, declining to sacrifice an inch of territory at any price.

“ What a discussion ! ” said an eye-witness.

"It was a regular duel. The two parties fought with incredible stubbornness. M. Venizelos was more wonderful than any of them; he rose to the highest summits of oratory, repulsing the arguments of his opponents. This magnificent defence of Hellenism has not been perpetuated by reporters, but the results will remain though the words are forgotten."

At seven o'clock the fate of Kavalla was decided. It was to belong definitely to Greece, and with it the little island of Thasos, which, as we have seen, was to share the fate of Kavalla.

But at the sitting of August 8 the President, M. Majoresco, informed the Conference of the views of Austria-Hungary and Russia, on reserving to themselves the right to revise the peace on the Kavalla question.

While corroborating this statement, M. Radeff, in the name of the Bulgarian delegation, read the following declaration: "The Bulgarian delegates, having been informed . . . of the communications of Austria-Hungary and Russia . . . declare that these communications have strengthened their resolu-

tion to sign peace without external objection or discussion."

The plot failed. The allied delegates protested. The Greek Government addressed a Note to the Great Powers to urge them to pronounce against any revision. France persuaded Russia not to insist upon the revision of the Treaty of Bucharest. The Emperor of Germany, on his side, begged his Ally to withdraw its claim to revision. Consequently the Treaty of Bucharest remains valid and intact till to-day.

But the Bulgarians were determined to win on one point; they wanted to bring their frontiers as near as possible to Kavalla. Their intention was obvious—to recover the coveted prize in the near future. M. Venizelos refused any fresh concession, falling back ingeniously upon his ignorance of military matters.

"I know nothing of military matters," he repeated. "I can do nothing but keep to the frontier decided upon by my King and his Staff."

Again matters had reached a deadlock, and no one would give way. General Coanda, the Chief of the Roumanian Staff, was in-

structed to separate the antagonists. He was admitted into the Assembly hall, studied the map, and submitted an intermediate line to the approval of the delegates, which conceded to Bulgaria some territories south of Ismili.

M. Venizelos still resisted ; finally he said to General Coanda : " I am not well versed in this subject, and I ought to await the consent of our Staff, whose instructions it is my mission to defend. Nevertheless I have such confidence in you that if you will take the responsibility of promising me that the alteration you propose does not compromise in any way the strategic position of Greece, I am ready to accept it."

" I can assure you it does not."

" Thank you, General. Then I accept it."

The difficulties having been thus removed, they returned to the Assembly, and M. Majoresco said with delight :

" I am happy to state that a general agreement has been reached on all points."

" When the bill is sent in," murmured General Fitchef, " it has to be paid."

General Fitchef was the only one of the



Bulgarian delegates who had an accurate view of events ; he was also the most reasonable.

\* \* \* \*

M. René Puaux, the correspondent of the *Temps* at Bucharest, has thus summed up his impressions of this period.

“It is well known that M. Venizelos, imitating Count Witte at Portsmouth, agreed on his own responsibility to grant concessions which had not been provided for in his instructions ; at Wednesday’s sitting he gave up a portion of the line that the Staff of King Constantine had laid down as the final word in the Greek demands. M. Venizelos did it, relying on the opinion of the Roumanian General Coanda. But it is not so well known that the Greek Prime Minister had some difficulty in inducing his Sovereign, the leader of a victorious army, to accept concessions that the atmosphere of Bucharest, very different from that of the headquarters at Livorno, had made him consider inevitable.

“When the telegrams which were exchanged between M. Venizelos and King Constantine are published, if ever they are, I think we shall see that the young Sovereign had to

exercise great self-control before he could bring himself to accept the views of his Prime Minister. The Bulgarian atrocities in Macedonia, and the sufferings which his own troops had to bear, were not likely to make King Constantine favourably disposed toward conciliation and concessions, but the absolute confidence he reposed in M. Venizelos overcame his scruples as a soldier. The dispute was nevertheless lengthy and bitter."

M. Hanotaux, in his book *La Guerre des Balkans et l'Europe* (p. 368), thus sums up the benefits acquired by Greece :

"Greece has shown extraordinary energy ; her position was not unlike that of Serbia ; she had to face two sides at once, the Bulgarian side with her armies, and the Italian side with diplomacy. She has made good, and she has won. If ever Pan-Hellenism felt on the point of realizing her dream it is at the present hour ; Crete, the islands, Albania, Salonika, the coast as far as Kavalla, is a haul the consequences of which in the future can hardly be estimated. Greece seems to be the maritime heir of the Turkish Empire ; now the sea—the Mediterranean Sea—is

always an incomparable element of greatness and prosperity for a nation ; if Greece is one day to exercise a wider domination, it is the sea that will give it her. Greece has always been a sea-power. The Power that can keep or control all the outlets and passages of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Power that possesses a commercial port like Salonika and a military port like Suda, if only she maintain a large enough navy, will be able to prevent any movement in those regions. Let us applaud the success that Greece has won by her patriotic perseverance, and let us wish her moderation and prudence to consolidate that success."

The whole of Saturday was spent in preparing the text and making copies of the treaty. It was signed on Sunday on a glorious day. A Greek journalist, M. S. Milas, has related a little incident which marked the close of the ceremony.

"The moment that the signatures were affixed the Roumanians gave the signal to depart. At the door I was squeezed between

M. Venizelos and M. Radeff, who said to me in perfect Greek :

“‘You must be pleased!’

“‘What, do you know Greek?’ asked M. Venizelos.

“‘Yes.’

“‘When did you learn it?’

“‘During the war,’ replied the Bulgarian delegate, with a significant smile.”

This same journalist also tells another curious anecdote. In the course of a dinner to which the Bulgarian delegates invited him, they began to praise M. Venizelos.

M. Tontchef summed up all their eulogy in one word :

“He is a charmer!”

\* \* \* \*

The reward for the great work he had just achieved soon came to him. Constantine XII conferred upon him the Grand Cross of the Order of the Saviour, and at the same time sent him a telegram, which referred most highly to his services :

“I thank you for announcing the signing of peace. God has sent a rich blessing on your work ; in the name of the country and

## PEACE

in my own name I express my royal thanks ; a new and glorious era is opening before us. In proof of my gratitude and esteem I confer upon you the Grand Cross of my Royal Order of the Saviour. You have deserved well of your country.

“CONSTANTINE R.”

When peace had been signed at Bucharest, one might have thought that M. Venizelos would take a well-earned rest. Such an idea shows great ignorance of his iron temperament ; instead he visited in turn the Greek colonies in Roumania, and the capital of Serbia, and travelled about the whole of Macedonia before he reached Salonika. There he summoned a number of persons, specialists of renowned competence, and with them studied the best means for consolidating the greatness of new Greece.

From there he hurried to Athens to receive the King, now crowned with the laurels of victory.

The diplomatic joust at Bucharest had given M. Venizelos an opportunity for displaying his skill as a diplomat and all the ver-

satility of his political genius ; his speeches at the Conference, at banquets, and at receptions are models of ability and skill. In spite of his success and the honours which crowned it, the great statesman kept his presence of mind and his dignified bearing ; fame made him neither arrogant nor vain, his character was not changed, his usual calm was unruffled, his well-known smile did not desert him.

## CHAPTER XI

### VENIZELOS AND EPIRUS

It will be interesting to examine the part and the attitude taken by M. Venizelos in the affair of Epirus ; it is a point on which there has been much controversy.

First of all we must inquire whether the Greek Government could have acted otherwise than it did. Could the Prime Minister have reasonably encouraged a revolt of which the Powers disapproved ? A moment's reflection will suffice to answer such a question.

Before her two successful wars Greece might perhaps have staked her all on this enterprise ; It would have been very imprudent to do so, and it as well to remember that in similar circumstances M. Venizelos's opponents when they were in power were obliged to give way to Turkish insolence over a more serious affair, that of Crete.

The duty of modern Greece is to consolidate what she has won at the cost of so much blood ; she has to assimilate the new provinces and make one harmonious whole of the mother-country.

Short-sighted diplomats assert that M. Venizelos, either through weakness or hesitation, made a grave error in letting favourable moments slip by. They think that Greece ought to have faced Europe with an accomplished fact, by occupying Epirus as far as Valona ; according to their theory, the fact of her being in possession would have materially assisted her claims for valuable compensation, especially with Italy.

But to hold this view is to leave out of the reckoning three incidents which are too recent to be forgotten.

During the Turko-Italian war, the Duke of the Abruzzi with his flotilla of torpedo-boats wanted to attack the coast of Epirus ; instantly Austria made indignant protests, demanded and obtained the recall of the Italian Admiral, and the formal declaration that no military operation would be attempted in Epirus.



Later on, during the first Balkan war, Serbia and Montenegro were compelled to abandon Albanian territory that they had acquired at the cost of terrific efforts. If Europe would not tolerate the presence of Serbs and Montenegrins, why should Greeks be treated differently ?

Finally, we must call to mind the attitude taken by the Marquis di San Giuliano during the first war. When he heard of the victorious advance of the Greek troops in Epirus he sent for the Greek chargé d'affaires and addressed him as follows :

" Italy has great interests in Southern Albania ; she therefore wishes to be informed in detail as to the projects of Greece in those regions. How far does she mean to extend her occupation ? "

The Greek chargé d'affaires asked to be allowed to postpone his reply to this embarrassing question ; a few days later he announced to the Marquis di San Giuliano that the Hellenic Government did not mean to go beyond Valona and Saseno.

Curt and decisive came the Italian Minister's reply :

“Italy will even go to the length of war to prevent Greece occupying Valona. On this point her decision is irrevocable. On the other hand she will gladly support the other schemes of Greece if she abandon her projects on Valona.”

We must not forget that at that moment Italy was laying claim, for the future Albanian State, to the town of Janina which had not as yet been taken by the Greeks.

What should the Greek Prime Minister have done? Did he really not give all the weight of his experience to the consideration of this question?

We have seen that it was not possible to bring off the *coup* of the accomplished fact; but was the policy of M. Venizelos in the affair of Epirus all that it ought to have been, and all that it might have been?

European diplomacy had determined the Greco-Albanian frontier without paying any attention to Greek claims; what was to be done? Other events of more importance were requiring the attention of the Greek Government; Austria and Italy therefore faced Greece with this dilemma.

“ We will consent to Scio and Mytilene being awarded to Greece if she will accept the Albanian boundary fixed by the Commission of Florence.”

The insistence of these two Powers was such that it involved the adhesion of the Triple Entente. Consequently, what could M. Venizelos do? Could he oppose Austro-Italian wishes? Who would have encouraged him to adopt such an attitude? We know from official sources that during his last visit to the capitals of Europe, he had sounded the Chancelleries of Europe, and had nowhere met with the smallest encouragement. France had candidly advised him in order to save the question of the islands not to insist upon the Epirus affair; moreover, the French had given him clearly to understand that no support was to be expected from Russia.

As there was no help to be had from the Triple Alliance it was evident that nothing more could be done. How could the Greek Government have justified its refusal to recognize the decision of the whole of Europe? Such an attitude would have been inexcusable and even dangerous, for the Powers might

perhaps have refused to recognize the adjudication of the islands to Greece, and might have given up Scio and Mytilene to Turkey.

More than this, though Greece has been obliged by *force majeure* to accept the frontiers laid down for her in Epirus, she has not abandoned the inhabitants of the district united to Albania. During his travels in Europe M. Venizelos advocated and discussed what privileges should be granted to the Epirotes ; at a later date, at the time of the negotiations at Corfu, the International Commission took note of the wishes expressed by the Greek Prime Minister. Besides this, M. Venizelos obtained a readjustment of frontiers in the direction of Argyrocastro, and thus restored to Greece many villages that were entirely Greek.

It is also necessary to remember that the Hellenic leader had to bear in mind the wishes of Roumania. The Prince of Wied is the nephew of the Queen of Roumania, and she professes a great affection for him. It may be imagined that M. Venizelos was in a particularly delicate position at Bucharest. He found the Court, the Government, and pub-

lic opinion all definitely determined to help by all means in their power the consolidation of the new State. On this side the Prime Minister had again to give way for fear of alienating Roumanian friendship, which was valuable to Greece from every point of view.

We are not writing an apology for the work of M. Venizelos, but we cannot refrain from praising his straightforward and moderate policy. Obviously the loss of Greek territory is painful for Hellenism; but those whose task it is to direct a State in process of formation must not be carried away by the success of armies: their first duty is to judge all things calmly and sanely.

“Recall all the great catastrophes of moral life that you have known. You will find that their victims have always been proud, and have become so by an excess of what the world calls luck. And how have these catastrophes come? Always by more luck, or what seemed so.”

These words of M. Paul Bourget contain a deep truth and a profound philosophy such as has guided M. Venizelos throughout the affair of Epirus. The Greek Prime Minister

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has had the great wisdom not to abuse his triumphs, and has thus spared his country the worst disasters. He has been right, and every wise and just man will admire him.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MAN

It is only fitting that we should endeavour to summarize in a few words the physical and moral characteristics of the great figure whose place in history we have endeavoured to define.

Physically M. Venizelos is rather tall ; his countenance betokens a simple and sober geniality. Beneath his broad forehead two piercing eyes reflect his habitual smile, which has been compared to that of La Gioconda. The special correspondent of the *Corriere della Sera* at Bucharest said of him that his smile " had conquered the formidable Bulgarian army."

M. Venizelos is very simple in his dress, and gives somewhat the impression of a Protestant pastor, with his gold-rimmed spectacles, behind which sparkle the keen eyes which reveal his steadfast soul.

M. Venizelos is not communicative ; it is useless to persist if he declines to tell you what he thinks on any subject ; you are only wasting your time.

I experienced this at the Conference of London ; there were ten of us trying to extract his secrets from him ; we could get nothing but monosyllabic replies : " Perhaps " . . . " Probably," or short sentences : " I can say nothing " . . . " I know nothing about it " . . . " Better wait and see." Try to concoct an interview with such materials!

Bear in mind his trip to Europe last winter ; his object was to sound the European Chancelleries upon the difficulties of modern Greece. He succeeded in visiting the capitals of the Great Powers, in crossing the Balkan States, without ever unmasking his inmost thoughts. From the day that he landed at Brindisi till his return to Athens, he was the prey of indiscreet and curious journalists ; nobody ever got anything out of him but conventional phrases.

Curiosity was much excited when at the end of his travels the Greek Minister met M.



## THE MAN

Pashitch at St. Petersburg, and they proceeded to Bucharest together. The correspondents of European newspapers at Belgrade went by special train to meet them.

M. Pashitch was interviewed first. He answered :

“ It is impossible to say anything.”

The Press representatives then approached M. Venizelos, who was in the next compartment.

“ Mr. President, public opinion is uneasy,” said the reporters to him, “ and looks to you for enlightenment.”

“ I can only confirm all that has been said by my honourable colleague, M. Pashitch, with whom I am in complete agreement,” replied M. Venizelos, smiling.

The journalists departed quite satisfied ; at least they had this happy retort to report.

Here is another example. Hardly had they reached Bucharest than the delegates of the other States overflowed in statements and interviews to the Press ; this caused all the gossip and intrigues which gave rise to so much discontent. Silence is golden, thought M. Venizelos, and he held his tongue.

Rarely did anyone get anything from him but his inscrutable smile.

\* \* \* \*

Who would have thought that the warrior of the White Mountains, the cool politician, the far-seeing diplomat, would have fallen a victim to the snares of Love. And yet . . . still young, full of imagination, the youthful lawyer of Canea met one day in his native town the twin soul who was to become later the beloved companion of his life.

An idyll of love was woven round this meeting, difficulties arose, but he succeeded in removing them and in winning the lady of his heart.

His friends and contemporaries relate that during his love-making M. Venizelos was exceedingly romantic. The winged son of Venus banished all other occupations and interests. Love alone can boast of having mastered and enthralled the wily Cretan. They were wedded. His dream was fulfilled ; happiness was his. But happiness, like all beautiful things, did not last long. The birth of his second child caused the death of this admirable woman. This was the only time that Fortune

frowned upon this man who had been the darling of Fortune all his life. From that time he devoted himself to the education of his two sons. All his love and care were dedicated to those children who reminded him of his dear wife. He will never marry again. Though in his political life M. Venizelos is practical and calculating, he is poetic in his family life, an idealist in his love.

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Ardent patriot though he is, M. Venizelos is yet practical and level-headed. Replying to an address from the Mayor of Athens he once said: "The past belongs to our ancestors." Though he does not forget that this past is fraught with imperishable glory, the Prime Minister considers that the former glory should not so dazzle men that they cannot see present realities; work is the only clue to the power of a nation, and its will to be and do.

To feed the people on chimeras is not his way; he loves unvarnished truth, as a hundred well-known incidents prove. Let us recall one which took place at the last by-election of a deputy at Athens; in the evening of the

ballot, M. Venizelos was at the Liberal Club with his friends. The Opposition in Parliament had been blaming him for having given up Epirus and the island of Saseno to Albania.

"The deputies of the Opposition," said he to his friends, "have been accusing me of having given up territories too lightly, but they do not remember the acquisitions we have won in two victorious wars."

"And Greece will grow greater still," exclaimed an influential member of the Liberal party.

"No," replied M. Venizelos. "We have enough with what we have won. We must get all in order now; we need rest and peace to consolidate and organize our new provinces."

In this spirit of moderation lies his great strength; it is very remarkable that he should have been able to impress his cool and calculating character on a people which is only too ready to rush to extremes. The politicians of the past revelled in fine speeches, and encouraged the masses in impossible dreams. M. Venizelos changed all that; instead of extolling the heroism of Themistocles and Canaris, he followed their example

by preparing Greek forces on land and sea, which is infinitely preferable.

His motto was always: "Our country must come first." It was his constant care. We may recall a typical incident which took place last Christmas in London. The Greek colony in this city had sent him magnificent baskets of flowers and fruit; at that season these offerings represented a large sum of money; a room at Claridge's Hotel was reserved for them. As he passed this beautiful produce he looked at it sadly and said to us:

"If only I had the money spent on these flowers for the wounded and for the families of our soldiers who have been killed in action."

M. Venizelos's patriotism is only equalled by his modesty, which is proved by two simple incidents.

Last year on his arrival in Paris he was greeted at the station by the ringing cheers of the Greek colony; his enthusiastic admirers intended to lift him shoulder high and carry him thus to his motor car. The Prime Minister patiently put his too eager friends aside, and went to his car on foot.

Later, on his return from Bucharest, the Athenians had prepared a warm welcome for him; this did not suit the President of Council. He altered his arrangements so as to arrive at Athens when he was not expected, and returned home unobserved.

A man such as this is impervious to the intoxication of glory and to the transports of vanity; perhaps he is proud. At all events, as M. Paul Bourget says,<sup>1</sup> "Vanity is not simple. Pride is, and all the more that it is more complete. The really proud man is self-sufficient. He has no desire to produce an effect. He is his own judge and his own audience. He is distinguished by a sort of superb tranquillity, like a beast of prey that realizes its strength."

For those who know the character of M. Venizelos intimately, there lies in those lines a singular testimony to his energetic spirit; they explain his "national pride," a pride in which selfishness has no part, and which is merely the feeling of duty done.

\* \* \* \*

M. Venizelos is a confirmed optimist. At

<sup>1</sup> *Le démon du midi.*

a banquet given on August 31, 1913, by the Liberals to celebrate the glorious issue of the two wars, he related how, on the day when he submitted the decree for mobilization for the royal signature, the King was still very doubtful ; the Prime Minister encouraged him and showed him that Greece was well prepared. "Sire," he added, "I guarantee that Your Majesty will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of your accession with a greater Greece." "Certainly," he continued, "I did not dream at that moment that Greece would be doubled, but I had a presentiment that she would be enlarged."

"Optimism is one of our greatest weaknesses," he said to me in London one day when I was speaking about the Dodecanese. He was right; but his optimism instead of being a weakness is a power ; for the pessimist is foredoomed to failure. Hope is vital to success, and the hopes of M. Venizelos extend to the bounds of possibility.

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The activity of the Prime Minister has become proverbial in Athens. In Crete his political colleagues were astounded by it ;

they relate that every day he worked regularly for sixteen hours, and that this was increased to eighteen hours when he was drawing up the legal code.

To Athens he brought the same passion for work, and he thought it quite natural to work sixteen or eighteen hours a day.

Surprising stories are told of this activity. Often, for example, after a night of Parliamentary debates, deputies ask him what time he can be seen at the Ministry the following day.

"Come and see me at eight o'clock" is his invariable answer.

While the deputies enjoy a well-earned rest, the President of the Council enters his study at six o'clock in the morning to start work.

He spends the rest of the day in feverish energy. After breakfast he goes home for an hour or two, then he goes to his other Ministry (for he is at the head of two departments, War and Admiralty). Then he is to be found on the ministerial bench, where he listens to the speakers during the whole sitting, agreeing with them or replying to them, fighting against his antagonists or defending his programme.



This hard worker takes an hour's rest between nine and ten o'clock in the evening ; half an hour for his dinner, half an hour for his daily walk, preferably round the Acropolis.

If the Chamber is sitting, he takes his seat on the stroke of ten ; otherwise he goes back to the Ministry for some urgent business, to study Bills, or the report of a commission, etc.

Once a month he goes to the theatre, preferably to a Greek play.

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In spite of his numerous and absorbing occupations, M. Venizelos manages to find time to take an interest in literature and art. He has an intimate knowledge of Greek literature, and of the minutest details of the quarrel between purists and colloquialists. He is an insatiable reader. At Therisso, in the middle of the revolutionary ebullition, he found time to study the *Antigone*, translated by his companion in arms, the writer Manos, to discuss linguistic questions and to polish up his English.

At Athens, when public attention was absorbed in the burning question of the Presidency of the Chamber, he sent his

orderly to fetch the last number of a Greek literary review. The very day of the election, while his friends were commenting bitterly on the unfavourable verdict of the ballot, M. Venizelos stopped at the window of a bookseller's shop; his glance soon discovered a new book. To go in and buy it was the work of an instant.

A profound student of ancient and modern authors, the Prime Minister is keenly interested in new productions of Greek literature and art. Often during the interruptions of a Parliamentary sitting he asks: "Well, what news at the theatre? Is so-and-so's play a success?"

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M. Venizelos has a thorough knowledge of agricultural matters, for he was bred and born in a country that is essentially agricultural.

Early in 1911 a dinner was given at the Bar of Phalerum to the Musulman deputy of Canea, Ali Bey. The conversation turned upon Cretan difficulties, and reference was made to agriculture, in which Ali Bey was interested. Immediately M. Venizelos began a discussion on different methods of

## THE MAN

culture, asking how so-and-so worked and what his land brought in, etc. The Prime Minister knew the agriculturists of Crete, their land, their methods, their returns, as if they had been his nearest friends. He had not been in Greece more than a few months before he had learnt more about the scientific progress of Greek agriculture than those who had studied the question most closely.

"It is certain," said one of the guests to him, "that your progress in Crete cannot be compared with ours."

"The difference arises," he replied, "from the fact that there the State takes an interest in agriculture, and a great number of intelligent young men go in for it. Gradually we shall see the same progress here."

When he sent for M. Roghen, the famous Dutch hydrographer, to study the soil of Greece, he spent three days in the greatest impatience, deciding with him what was to be done, urging him to get to work, terrified lest he should not profit from his information.

## CHAPTER XIII

### VENIZELOS AND THE WORLD WAR

As soon as the European war broke out M. Venizelos, the friend of France and her Allies, directed his policy towards the Triple Entente.

When the bombardment of the Dardanelles by the Anglo-French fleet began, he thought the favourable moment had come for Greece to intervene on the side of the Allies, and in January, 1915, he drew up for King Constantine two memoranda, reproduced further on, in which he lays down the necessity for Greek intervention on the side of the Triple Entente.

M. Venizelos wanted to draw Roumania into this line of policy, and thus obtain the co-operation of all the Christian Balkan States. He pointed out to the King that this reconstitution of the Balkan League would ensure a local superiority in the East to those States which had revived it. He also insisted upon the support that these armies would bring to

the Powers of the Triple Entente, a support which might be strong enough to turn the balance instantly and decisively in favour of the Allies, and which from that fact alone would entail a right upon their gratitude. In exchange for this initiative Greece might count upon a large portion of the Turkish possessions in Asia Minor, equal in extent to her European territory which she had just doubled by two successive wars.

The dangers of this enterprise seemed too risky to the King and his Staff. Though he did not object to an association with the Triple Entente, he considered that it would be necessary to ensure the co-operation of Bulgaria, but he could not resign himself to the territorial sacrifices which his Prime Minister suggested in the last extremity. He also feared that there would be massacres of Greeks in different parts of Turkey which would compel him to divide his army ; and finally his Staff was not sure enough which side would win the victory to advise a departure from neutrality in favour of one of the two belligerent groups.

We give in full the two memoranda ad-

addressed to King Constantine by his Prime Minister, which show the broad lines of his policy, worthy of a Cavour.

*First Letter.*

“January 11.

“SIRE,—I have the honour to submit to Your Majesty the contents of a communication made to me by the British Minister by direction of Sir Edward Grey. By this communication Greece is once more faced by one of the most critical situations in her national history. Till to-day our policy has consisted in the preservation of neutrality, in so far as our engagement with our ally Serbia has not required us to depart from it. But to-day we are called upon to take part in the war, not only in order to perform a moral duty, but in exchange for compensations, which, when realized, would make Greece great and powerful to a degree that the greatest optimists could not have contemplated a few years ago.

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“In order to succeed in obtaining these great compensations, we shall certainly have to face great dangers. But after long and

profound study of the question, I have come to the conclusion that we ought to face those dangers. We ought chiefly to face them because even if we were not now to take part in the war, and if we contrived to maintain our neutrality to the end, we should still be exposed to great dangers.

“ If to-day we allow this new Austro-German invasion to crush Serbia, will it stop at our Macedonian frontier, and will it not be attracted naturally to Salonika? But even supposing that this danger is avoided, and admitting that Austria, satisfied by the military defeat of Serbia, does not try to establish herself in Macedonia, can we doubt that Bulgaria on Austria's invitation will try to advance to the occupation of Serbian Macedonia? And if that should happen, what would be our position? We should have to go to Serbia's assistance, unless we would dishonour ourselves by failing to fulfil our engagements as allies. But if, indifferent to our moral degradation, we remain passive, we should then acquiesce in the overthrow of the Balkan balance of power in favour of Bulgaria who, thus fortified, might

either immediately or after a short time, attack us while we were deprived of every ally and friend.

“If, on the contrary, we were then to hasten to Serbia’s help in order to fulfil an imperative duty, we should do so under far more unfavourable circumstances than if we were to go to her help to-day. For then Serbia would be already crushed, and consequently our help would not be efficacious, or at least not sufficiently so ; while, on the other hand, by refusing the overtures of the Great European Powers to-day, we should have, even in case of victory, no definite compensation for the help that we should have given.

\* \* \* \*

“ We must also examine the conditions under which we should take part in the struggle. Above all we must try to obtain the co-operation not only of Roumania, but if possible of Bulgaria also. If this could be achieved, and all the Christian Balkan States could combine, not only would all danger of a local defeat be dissipated, but their participation would constitute an important reinforcement



in the struggle undertaken by the Entente Powers ; it would be no exaggeration to say that this participation would exercise a considerable influence in favour of their predominance.

“For this scheme to succeed, I think that important concessions must be made to Bulgaria. Until the present time, not only have we refused to discuss the subject, but we have announced that we should oppose any large concessions to her on Serbia’s part on the grounds that they might upset the balance of power in the Balkans as determined by the Treaty of Bucharest. Our policy has been entirely guided on these lines until to-day. But conditions have changed ; now that the realization of our national aims in Asia Minor has become a possibility, we might consent to some sacrifices in the Balkans to ensure the success of so vast a conception.

“We must first of all withdraw our objections to concessions from Serbia to Bulgaria, even if those concessions should extend to the right bank of the Vardar. But if these did not suffice to induce Bulgaria to co-operate

with her former Allies, or at least to maintain a benevolent neutrality, I should not hesitate—however painful the process—to advise the sacrifice of Kavalla in order to save Hellenism in Turkey and to ensure the creation of a truly great Greece comprising almost all the countries wherein Hellenism wielded its sway throughout the many centuries of its long history. We should not make this sacrifice as the price of Bulgaria's neutrality, but only as a compensation for her active participation with the other Allies in the war.

“If my view were adopted, it would be necessary to have a guarantee, through the intervention of the Entente Powers, that Bulgaria would undertake to purchase the property of all the inhabitants who wished to emigrate to Greece from the territory conceded to her. At the same time a convention should secure that the Greek population within the limits of Bulgaria should be exchanged against the Bulgarian population within the limits of Greece; the property of these populations should be reciprocally purchased by the respective States. This exchange of populations and the purchase of property should be

carried out by commissions composed of five members, of whom England, France, Russia, Greece and Bulgaria should each appoint one ; the fulfilment of all these conditions should precede the actual concession of Kavalla on our part.

“An ethnological rearrangement might thus be permanently effected, and the idea of a Balkan Confederation might be realized ; in any case, an alliance might be concluded between these States with mutual guarantees, which would enable them to devote themselves to their development, economic and otherwise, without being entirely absorbed from the start in strengthening their military resources. At the same time, as a partial compensation for this concession, we should demand that in the event of Bulgaria extending beyond the Vardar, the sector Doiran—Ghevguéli should be conceded to us so that we should have a secure frontier against Bulgaria in the north, as we should be deprived of the excellent frontier which now separates us from her on the east.

“Unfortunately Bulgarian greed is such that it is by no means certain that any concessions, however large, would satisfy Bulgaria

and induce her co-operation, but at least we ought to ensure the co-operation of Roumania, for without her our entry into the conflict would be too perilous.

"It is unnecessary to add that we should have to ask the Powers of the Triple Entente to promise the requisite funds to meet the expenses of the war and to enable us to purchase in their markets the necessary military supplies.

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"My opinion that we should accede to the request that has been made us to take part in the war is also founded upon other considerations. By remaining impassive spectators of the conflict, we run other dangers than those already enumerated, which would be entailed by the eventual crushing of Serbia. For even if the project of a fresh attack upon Serbia were abandoned, and Austria and Germany in order to make certain of victory concentrated upon the two principal theatres of war, Poland and Flanders, still the dangers run by us would be very great; once these two Powers were victorious they could insist upon the same alterations in the Balkans that would

arise from the crushing of Serbia, independently of the fact that their victory would strike a fatal blow at the independence of all small States, and without mentioning the instant damage we should sustain by the loss of the islands. And finally for this reason, that if the war should end without a decisive victory for either side, but with a return to the state of things existing before the war, then the extermination of Hellenism in Turkey would follow surely and rapidly.

“ Turkey, coming unscathed out of the war which she has dared to wage against three great Powers and emboldened by a feeling of security from her alliance with Germany—an alliance which will evidently be maintained in the future as it suits the views of Germany—would set to work systematically and without delay to exterminate Hellenism in Turkey, by driving out the Greek population without mercy and confiscating its property.

“ She would encounter no opposition from Germany, but on the contrary would get encouragement, as Asia Minor, which she covets for the future, would be rid of a competitor. The wholesale expulsion of thousands of

Greeks living in Turkey will not only ruin them, but will probably drag the whole of Greece to economic disaster.

“ For all these reasons I have come to the conclusion that under the above conditions our participation in the war is absolutely imperative. As I have already pointed out at the beginning, this participation will also be exposed to grave dangers.

“ But above all these dangers to which we should be exposed were we to enter upon the struggle, there rises a hope, and as I trust a well-founded hope, of saving a great proportion of Hellenism now in Turkey, and of creating a great and powerful Greece. And even in the event of our failure, we should have a quiet conscience, knowing that we had fought to free our countrymen still in thralldom and exposed to the direst dangers ; knowing that we had fought also for the general interests of humanity and for the independence of small nations, which a Turko-German predominance would jeopardize irreparably. And, finally, even though we fail, we should retain the esteem and friendship of those powerful nations which created Greece and have helped

and supported her so many times. While our refusal to carry out the obligations of our alliance with Serbia would not only destroy our moral existence as a nation, and expose us to the dangers already mentioned, but would leave us without friends and without credit in the future. Under such conditions our national development would become exceedingly perilous.

"I am Your Majesty's very humble servant."

*Second Letter.*

"January 17.

"SIRE,—Your Majesty is already acquainted with the reply of the Roumanian Government to our proposal relative to common action in favour of Serbia. This reply, as I understand it, signifies that Roumania will refuse us any military co-operation unless Bulgaria takes part. Even supposing that Roumania would be satisfied by an official declaration of neutrality from Bulgaria in the event of Greco-Roumanian co-operation with Serbia, it is highly improbable that such a declaration could be obtained from Bulgaria. Moreover, the Staff itself does not consider Greco-Serbo-

Roumanian co-operation an absolute guarantee of security, so long as Bulgaria holds aloof, even after a declaration of neutrality, evidently made with the intention of violating it as soon as it would be to her interest to do so.

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“ Under these circumstances I think it is time to face steadfastly the problem of the sacrifices which will be necessary to obtain, if possible, Pan-Balkan co-operation for common participation in the war. Joint action by the Balkan States will not only ensure them local supremacy in the southern theatre of war whatever may happen. It would also be a valuable reinforcement to the Powers of the Triple Entente, which might suffice to weigh the balance decisively on their side in the terrible conflict now being waged.

“ The cession of Kavalla is certainly a very painful sacrifice, and I feel the profoundest regret in advising it. But I do not hesitate to advise it when I contemplate the national compensations which this sacrifice would ensure for us. I feel that the concessions in Asia Minor about which Sir Edward Grey has made overtures to us, may, especially if we



resign ourselves to sacrifices to Bulgaria, assume such proportions that a territory as large as, and no less rich than, Greece will be added to us, already doubled as we have been by two victorious wars.

“ I believe that if we were to ask for that part of Asia Minor which is situated west of a line starting from Cape Phineka in the south, and following the mountains of Al-Dag, Kistet-Dag, Karli-Dag, Anamas-Dag as far as Sultan-Dag, and thence by Kesir-Dag, Tourman-Dag, Ghesil-Dag, Dumanitza-Dag, Olympus-Musicus ending at Kaz-Dag in the Gulf of Adramyti—in the event of an outlet in the Sea of Marmora not being granted to us—there would be every probability of our demand being accepted; the extent of this territory exceeds 125,000 square kilometres: it is thus the same size as Greece doubled by two wars.

“ The dimensions of the part that we should cede (the cazas of Sali-Chaban, Kavalla and Drama) is no more than 2,000 square kilometres. Consequently it represents in extent one-sixtieth of the probable compensations in Asia Minor, without counting the compensation of Doiran—Ghevguéli which we should

also demand. It is true that from the point of view of wealth, the value of the territory ceded by us is very great and out of all proportion to its extent. But it is certain that it cannot be compared with the wealth of that part of Asia Minor of which we should demand the concession. The cession of Greek populations is indeed of much greater importance. But if the Greek population of the ceded part may be calculated at 30,000 souls, that of the part of Asia Minor which we claim is more than 800,000 ; it is thus certainly twenty-five times greater than that which we should give up.

“ Moreover, as I have already pointed out in my previous memorandum, the cession of the Drama—Kavalla district would take place under the formal condition that the Bulgarian Government should purchase the property of all those who wish to emigrate out of the ceded territory. And I do not doubt that everyone of our countrymen after they had sold their possessions would migrate to that new Greece which would arise in Asia Minor, and thus increase and strengthen the Hellenic population.

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“ Sire, under these conditions, I firmly be-

lieve that we should lay aside any hesitation. It is unlikely and it is improbable that such an opportunity as is offered to Hellenism to-day to complete her national restoration, will ever arise again. If we do not take part in the war, whatever the result, the Hellenism of Asia Minor will be finally lost to us. For if, on the one hand, the Powers of the Triple Entente win the victory, they will divide among themselves or with Italy both Asia Minor and the remains of Turkey. If, on the other hand, Germany and Turkey are victorious, not only will the 200,000 Greeks, who have already been driven from Asia Minor, have to renounce all hope of returning to their homes, but the number of those who will ultimately be expelled may assume alarming proportions. In any case, the triumph of Germanism will mean its absorption of the whole of Asia Minor.

“ Under these circumstances how can we let slip this opportunity which Divine Providence has given us, to realize our most daring national ideals, to create a Greece enfolding almost all the lands where Hellenism reigned supreme during its long history, a Greece com-

prising very fertile territories which would ensure our preponderance in the Ægean Sea?

“ Curiously enough, the Staff does not seem to be greatly attracted by these considerations. On the one hand it is afraid of the difficulty of administering new territories on so vast a scale, and on the other hand it fears that by our participation in the war we should be more exhausted than the Bulgarians and that after the war they would seize the opportunity to attack us. No one can minimize the first difficulty, but I do not think that it should lead us to abandon the realization of our national ideals on the unique occasion which is offered to us to-day. Besides, the total results realized by Hellenic administration in Macedonia prove that in spite of numerous difficulties, this task is not beyond the power of Greece and Hellenism.

“ The second fear is less justifiable. The Balkan wars have proved that we do not get exhausted more quickly than the Bulgarians. It is nevertheless true that for several years until we had organized all our military power

on the basis of our resources in men from the recruiting of Greater Greece, we should be obliged, in the event of war in the Balkan peninsula, to send part of our forces to Asia Minor in order to prevent a local rising. Yet such a rising would be improbable, for the Ottoman Empire having completely ceased to exist, our Musulman subjects would be good and peaceful citizens. However, the armed force necessary for this could be easily raised among the Hellenic population of Asia Minor. Besides, it would be simple to guarantee ourselves against the Bulgarian danger by drawing up for this period a formal agreement with the Powers of the Triple Entente, in virtue of which they would come to our help in the event of Bulgaria attacking us in the interval.

“ In my opinion, even without this agreement, we should have nothing to fear on the side of Bulgaria immediately after a successful war in which we had fought side by side. Bulgaria herself would be occupied by the organization of the new provinces which she would have acquired. If, however, she were so blind as to wish to attack us, there is no doubt that Serbia would be bound to us both

by the obligations of her alliance and by gratitude.

“ But it must be noted we are by no means certain that the cession of Kavalla would induce Bulgaria to abandon neutrality in order to co-operate with us and with the Serbs. It is probable that she may dare either to claim these concessions as the price of her neutrality, or else to insist upon their cession at once before the end of the war and whatever the issue may be.

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“ We cannot accept any of these conditions. If, however, our participation in the war should fail owing to Bulgaria's attitude we should keep the friendship and sympathy of the Powers of the Triple Entente. And if we cannot hope for concessions equal to those we should have obtained in exchange for our participation in the war, we can, however, hope with certainty that our interests will have the sympathetic support of those Powers, and that we shall not be deprived of their financial support after the war.

“ I must add, moreover, that the course of events and the proposal that has been made

us to hand over to us large territorial concessions in Asia Minor, proves to me indubitably that the vitality shown by new Greece has won the confidence of certain Powers who consider her an important factor for reform in the East, while the Turkish Empire is crumbling away.

“The support of those Powers will provide us with all the financial and diplomatic means necessary to cope with the inherent difficulties of so sudden a growth. Confident in this support, Greece can follow boldly the new and wonderful paths opening out before her. Happily Your Majesty is in the prime of life not only to create a Greater Greece by your sword, but also to consolidate this military exploit by a perfect political reorganization of the new State, and to hand over to your heir when the time shall come a finished work, of superhuman greatness, and such that it has been given to few princes to accomplish.

“I am Your Majesty’s very humble servant,

“EL. VENIZELOS.”

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Why did the King, who in January agreed with the foresight of his Prime Minister, refuse

## VENIZELOS RESIGNS

a month later to follow him in that magnificent conception of making Greece co-operate with the Triple Entente? This is a political and psychological problem to which we cannot offer any solution for want of documents.

The fact remains that when M. Venizelos suggested to the King that Greece should co-operate with the Entente in the operations at the Dardanelles, the latter did not think it advisable to follow his Prime Minister. M. Venizelos, in disagreement with the King, handed in his resignation. From that moment German propaganda, assisted by the Opposition, set to work to widen the gulf between the King and M. Venizelos.

In the memoranda addressed to the King, and published, M. Venizelos showed that the King and he had contemplated the possibility of the cession of Kavalla to Bulgaria. This sacrifice was to ensure her neutrality, and big territories in Asia Minor were to compensate for the loss. The Gounaris Government, which succeeded M. Venizelos denied this part of the memorandum. M. Venizelos wrote directly to the King recalling it to his memory. In the King's name the Government replied



that M. Venizelos had misunderstood the royal meaning.

This reply from the throne struck the patriot to the heart. Deeply hurt, the man who had doubled the territory of his country felt compelled to leave it. For him it was a question of honour.

"The King has allowed himself to be influenced by the Staff," he said to the correspondent of the *Journal*. "They would not agree with me. They will not consent to the concessions which I had proposed. I regret it. For Greece has just lost an opportunity to enlarge her territory. I am going away feeling very sad, but convinced that I have done my duty."

"Your exile will not be permanent?" asked the journalist.

M. Venizelos hesitated a little before replying.

"I do not know. Events will shape my conduct. But I can assure you that I do not feel by any means exhausted. I am a born fighter. I have fought all my life. If necessary I will fight again for the greatness of my country."

It was unfortunate that such a misunder-

standing should have parted the soldier who won battles from the diplomat who prepared them. Both of them were meant to work for the greatness of Greece. All true patriots hope that these two great men will be able to meet on common ground, understand one another and restore those friendly relations which led to two victorious wars ; and that under their auspices the Greek army, in co-operation with the Allies, may thrust back the Hellenic frontiers beyond Ionia, and beyond the Greek lands of Asia Minor, which were in bygone days the glorious cradle of Hellenism.

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Happily the elections of June 13 gave a strong majority to M. Venizelos's party : touched by this popular plebiscite and seeing his country endangered by a weak Government defeated at the elections, he decided that he would not persist in his first decision to abandon politics, and he undertook the leadership of his party.

At the opening of the Chamber on August 16 after the election of its president, M. C. Zavitzanos, a well-known man in Greek political circles, belonging to the Venizelist party,

the Prime Minister, D. Gounaris, handed in his resignation to the King.

The latter, according to the Constitution, sent for M. Venizelos to Tatoï, where he was then convalescent. For two hours the two regenerators of Greece discussed matters, but never referred to the painful episode which had parted them a few months before ; they endeavoured to find an issue to the difficult situation in which Greece was placed, for M. Venizelos had inherited a heavy burden. A few days previously the Quadruple Entente had handed a Note to M. Gounaris, requesting that Greece should make concessions to Bulgaria with the object of reviving the Balkan League on the side of the Quadruple Entente.

Public opinion in Greece had been aroused against any territorial concession. M. Gounaris then hurriedly replied to the Note by a categoric refusal which burnt his bridges for any ulterior arrangement. Such was the position when the King and M. Venizelos embarked on their discussion. These two great men came to an agreement, M. Venizelos undertook to form the new ministry and took the oath on August 23, 1915.

What is the point on which the King and his great Prime Minister are at one? As we write it is impossible to know. The future will tell us what was decided at Tatoï. But it is certain that M. Venizelos will continue a policy favourable to the Entente Powers and especially to England (of whom he is the sincere and devoted admirer) and that Greece will follow the evolution marked out for her by the force of Destiny, which since 1912 has been so gloriously personified by M. Venizelos.

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We have tried in these short notes to give a sufficiently complete analysis of M. Venizelos's noble character. Our work ends here, but the work of the great statesman continues its fertile evolution. There is still much to be done; fresh materials must be found, the edifice now being built must be consolidated, as the Prime Minister said himself to the Athenians just before the municipal elections last February.

The energy of one man has sufficed to galvanize a nation and to beget in her the consciousness of duty to be done; he infused new life into her, and turned her footsteps in

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the paths of regeneration. The prestige of M. Venizelos, his foresight, his iron will, are the best security for a glorious and complete fulfilment. Soon new and brilliant pages will be added to the history of Greece, thanks to the influence and incessant labour of the Great Statesman.

